

MONITORING



A training course for REACT Teams and members

This is a revised edition of *Monitoring*, a REACT International Course. The known history of this course is:

1982 first written by the Forum Monitoring Task Group
1991 updated by Russ Willis
1996 updated by the REACT International Training Committee under the leadership of Bonnie Zygmunt
1999 incorporated into the manual for new REACT teams
2017 updated by Walter G. Green III

This edition has been updated to reflect changes in the monitoring mission and environment in the years since its original publication, while retaining the mission of the original course as an introduction for REACT members to the techniques of monitoring radio calls for assistance.

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Note: If you know the names of any of the members involved in writing previous editions of this course, please contact the Training Committee so that we can give them appropriate credit.

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I. REACT's ROLE IN EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

REACT members offer two key capabilities that expand the capabilities of the emergency communications system in a community:

- (1) The ability to gather information directly from and provide information to members of the public who are using Amateur or Personal Radio Services to call for assistance or to report hazards and impacts from emergencies and disasters.
- (2) The ability to operate as a team to supplement existing public safety communications from agency to agency in a major emergency.

There are a number of organizations that can do the second function, including:

- Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES),
- Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES),
- Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network (SATERN),
- Military Affiliate Radio Systems (MARS), and
- Various auxiliary emergency communications service groups.

However, REACT is the only organization with members trained and equipped to do the first function, monitoring. That means we need to be good at doing this basic task, and in turn that means training and practice. It is important to note that REACT also provides an organization that is the basis for typed resources that are used to working together as a team to supplement the capabilities of other communications system. Both of these functions require that your team be integrated with the emergency services and disaster response system of your community. It also means that your team must up to date in its planning, organization, equipment, and technical skills.

II. MONITORING BASICS

WHAT IS MONITORING?

Monitoring is the act of listening to a radio frequency or channel to:

- (1) Receive and answer calls for assistance, whether routine assistance to travelers, or emergency assistance in the case of accidents, major emergencies, or disasters.

- (2) Receive reports from the public of developing or ongoing hazardous conditions, injuries to people, or damage to property.
- (3) Relay calls for assistance or reports from the public to the appropriate public safety answering point (9-1-1 center or dispatch center) or emergency management agency.

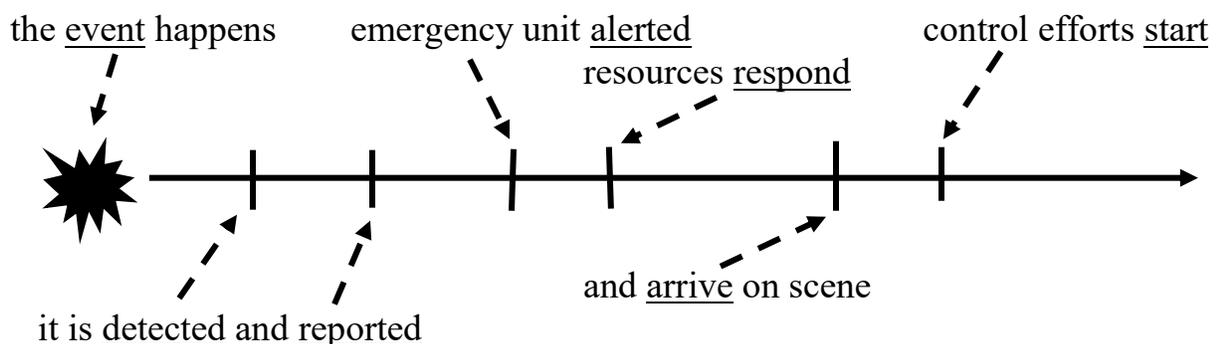
IT ISN'T THE 1970s ANY MORE

In the days of the CB Craze of the 1970s, motorists routinely made requests for assistance or reported accidents over Citizens Band Channel 9 to one of the dozens of organizations that provided national or local monitoring for emergencies. By the 1990s a well-run monitoring program in a medium size city might be lucky to handle 20 calls a month. Today, the nearly universal use of cellular telephones and GPS units means that almost no one uses a CB radio to call for help under normal conditions.

However, this does not mean that monitoring should be ignored as a key skill for REACT members. There are still a significant number of Citizens Band radio equipped vehicles on the highways, and in a disaster the monitor can perform a vital role in providing assistance to motorists in evacuations, in communicating with trucks carrying relief supplies to a disaster area, and in communicating with volunteers not affiliated with a formal disaster response organization. There are also other radio services that have calling frequencies which may be used to call for assistance.

THE RESPONSE PROBLEM

Let's review the timeline we find in the start of any emergency response.



1. **EVENT** – the event that causes the emergency situation may be an immediate, acute happening, or it may be a chronic event that gets slowly worse over time.

2. **DETECTED** – from the emergency response system’s perspective, if no one realizes there is a problem, then no one will respond. Some detections are easy – a three car accident with injuries in front of a fire station when the engine company is in quarters, for example. Some are delayed – a vehicle that has run off the road on a road that is infrequently travelled.

3. **REPORTED** – an incident can be detected, but not recognized and reported. Someone might decide that he does not want to get involved or that it is none of his business. A driver who sees a ripped-out section of guardrail could believe it to be an old accident site. A vehicle down an embankment has probably already been reported, so why overburden the public safety answering point with yet another call about something they already know? By the time that you are alerted as a monitor, some period of time may have passed. And you still have to get the details and report it to a public safety answering point.

4. **ALERTED** – as soon as you receive a report of an accident or emergency event, you should pass the information on so that a response can be initiated. This typically in terms of minutes for a call to a public safety answering point (a 911 center) and that center’s alerting of responders.

5. **RESPOND** – and then the responders have to respond. Fire, police, and emergency medical services response to an emergency incident is measured in minutes.

6. **ARRIVE** – in a city, fire and emergency medical services are expected to arrive on scene within 5 minutes of being dispatched by their dispatch agency. Their response areas are designed to give this speedy response. In more rural areas or when multiple incidents are in progress, response time may be longer.

7. **START** – once on scene, a fire officer climbing out of his engine has to assess the scene and make a quick initial attack plan or a paramedic has to assess the scene and the patient. The senior responder on scene has to establish command, report on scene, make a quick plan, assign people to tasks, etc.

As a monitor where can you influence the time line? In the reporting. This means that you need to:

- Rapidly respond to the radio call,
- Get the report down on paper and verify it quickly, and
- Immediately call the public safety answering point or other agency.

If you are organized and in practice this can be done in well under 2 minutes.

RESPONSIBILITY

When a monitor receives a call for assistance or one providing a report from the public on conditions, by acknowledging the call the monitor assumes responsibility for either resolving the problem or putting the caller in touch with someone who can resolve it. There are several parts to this:

A moral responsibility. By answering a call, you commit yourself to doing your best to ensure the safety and well-being of the person who is calling. As volunteers, we are carrying on the tradition of volunteer emergency response that is a basic form of service to our fellow citizens in time of need.

A legal responsibility. As a volunteer communications organization we hold ourselves out as providing an emergency service. Depending on state law, this may create a legal duty to act on our part. When we answer a call, our actions may cause the person who calls for help to not take other actions to improve their situation because he or she has confidence that we will follow through. A call once answered should never be abandoned without making every effort to carry it to a successful outcome.

A professional responsibility. It is widely accepted that volunteers can and should provide their service at a level equivalent to that of paid professionals. The fact that you are a volunteer is not an excuse for poor performance. By doing a professional job, you increase the odds of a successful outcome and enhance the reputation of REACT and of your team.

A responsibility to stabilize the situation. Callers may be excited, shaken, alarmed, frantic, or hostile. By being calm we can reduce the caller's stress level, making the situation a little less threatening and improving our chances of getting the information we need and giving the instructions we need to give. By repeating our

instructions to the caller we can break through their distress and motivate them to action. By giving clear instructions we may help the callers to help themselves.

A responsibility to REACT. The individual REACT member is the public face of our organization, both on air and in person. How you act creates a lasting impression of our organization with the public and with the public safety services. Be professional, look professional, act professional.

THE FOUR Cs

How to act professionally in emergency communications can be summarized with the Four Cs:

(1) **CALM** – respond calmly to every emergency report.

- Do not respond to excitement, stress, anger, despair, or even hostility and obscenities by becoming emotionally involved in the call.
- Do not verbally respond to insults or provocations by a caller. Remember that he or she is the person with the problem and that your job is to get them help.
- A calm voice on the air is reassuring, and calm repetition of questions to gather information or instructions on what to do may break through the caller's stress and excitement to restore their ability to more effectively deal with the emergency they face.

(2) **COURTEOUS** – be polite, even if the caller is not. At the moment you are talking to them you are REACT, you are the public safety services of the community, you are the community. No matter how badly the event has impacted them, you want to be remembered in the aftermath as someone who did a good job of helping them.

(3) **CORRECT** – be accurate in gathering, recording, and reporting the details. Do not add your assumptions to fill in the blanks in the information the caller has told you – report only what they have said. Verify the details by reading them back.

- There is one possible addition to what the caller has said. If you hear noises in the background that may help in locating a caller, that expand the report, or that might cause you to question whether this is a legitimate report, mention that to the public safety answering point, but be clear that this is additional information based on what you heard.

It is a good practice to have and use a standard form for recording calls. This helps to make sure that you ask all the important questions, and that you do not forget information in the time between the call and your report to the public safety answering point.

(4) **CONCISE** – be brief, and to the point. Your first priority is to get the details and report them immediately to the appropriate public safety answering point so that the response can start.

THE TYPES OF MONITORING

Monitors can provide coverage in four basic ways:

(1) Primary Monitor

- Operates from a base station in a fixed location.
- Scheduled to provide coverage for a specific time period or assigned to provide coverage for a specific area.
- Should answer any call for assistance by the second transmission by the caller.
- Should remain in close proximity to the radio.

(2) Secondary Monitor

- Operates from a base station in a fixed location.
- Provides additional coverage in an area or at a time assigned to a primary monitor.
- Provides coverage when able to do so, but not necessarily continuously.
- Answers a call if a primary monitor does not answer within two transmissions by the caller.

Note that today relatively few Teams can provide the traditional primary monitor/secondary monitor layers of coverage on a day to day basis. Most monitoring is on a part-time and occasional basis. However, Team emergency operations plans should include a staffing plan to ensure continuous monitoring in major emergencies, and Teams should regularly practice their procedures for implementing continuous monitoring.

(3) Mobile Monitor

- Operates from a mobile vehicle or hand held portable radio while in transit from one location to another.
- Provides transient coverage over the route of travel.
- Coverage is for limited time periods.
- If a call for assistance is heard, the monitor should safely exit traffic and park, answer the caller, and relay details by cellular telephone to the public safety answering point.

Note – obtain appropriate advice from an attorney or law enforcement agency as to whether use of a hand-held radio or radio microphone falls under your state’s distracted driving prohibitions. These laws were originally intended to focus on texting while driving, but the breadth of the language in some statutes excludes use of any electronic device.

(4) Emergency Beacon Monitoring

- Operates from a scanner in a fixed or mobile location to detect marine or aircraft emergency beacons or personal location beacons.
- Provides coverage to detect distress signals from aircraft or boats or from lost or injured people in the outdoors.

WHAT FREQUENCIES DO YOU MONITOR?

When this course was first written, the frequency or channel you monitored was a simple choice, Citizens Band Channel 9. That is no longer the case. There are a number of possible services and channels or frequencies on which calls for help may be made. A team which can provide monitoring on multiple frequencies is a much more valuable resource in emergencies.

Radio Service	Primary Frequency or Channel Monitored	Format of Emergency Report
Amateur Radio	146.52 MHz	No standard format
Citizens Band	Channel 9 Channel 19	Some may remember the CLIP format: Call sign – identification Location Injuries – number, type Problem – type of emergency

Family Radio Service	462.5625 Mhz Channel 1 – no tones	Call for 2 minutes every hour on the hour and listen for reply for 3 minutes.
General Mobile Radio Service	462.5625 Mhz Channel 1 unofficial calling channel 462.6750 Mhz Channel 20 unofficial emergency channel 467.6750 Mhz repeater output unofficial emergency channel	No standard format. May call for 2 minutes every hour on the hour and listen for reply for 3 minutes if using a combined GMRS/FRS radio.
Multi-Use Radio Service	No established channel	No standard format.
Personal Locator Beacon	406.025-406.076 MHz 121.5 MHz	Alert and homing signal only for individuals.
Aircraft Emergency Locator Transmitter	406.025-406.076 MHz 121.5 MHz	Alert and homing signal only for aircraft.
Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon	406.025-406.076 MHz 121.5 MHz	Alert and homing signal only for boats.

Amateur Radio – amateur radio lacks a standard emergency frequency that is universally recognized by all amateur radio operators. However, 146.52 MHz is used as a simplex VHF calling frequency in the United States, and that is a logical frequency to monitor if you are a licensed Amateur operator.

Citizens Band – although Citizens Band emergency use of Channel 9 has largely evaporated on a day to day basis, and Channel 19 usage by motorists and truckers has decreased significantly, Channels 9 and 19 remain as citizen access channels. A significant number of vehicles still have Citizens Band antennas.

Family Radio Service – the National SOS Radio Network (affiliated with Radio Relay International) advocates that users of Family Radio Service radios transmit distress calls every hour, on the hour, on Channel 1 with no tones enabled. The individual in distress should call for 2 minutes and then listen for a reply for 3 minutes. Expect anyone following their guidance to give: (1) their name, (2) their location, and (3) the nature of the emergency.

General Mobile Radio Service – emergency calls may be received on GMRS Channel 1, the unofficial national calling channel, and on Channel 20, the unofficial emergency assistance channel. Repeaters permit wider area coverage, but a

substantial percentage of repeaters are either restricted to members only or require advanced permission for their use.

Multi-Use Radio Service – the Multi-Use Radio Service does not appear to have any substantial number of users likely to use it for emergency communications.

Emergency Beacons – emergency beacons for aircraft, boats, and individuals have a substantial record of lives saved through notification through a search and rescue satellite based system. The most recent 406 MHz beacons allow rapid and precise geolocation of signals. However, there are a substantial number of older design beacons still in use which broadcast only a signal on 121.5 MHz, which is no longer monitored by the satellite system. Monitoring this frequency may provide some level of detection of emergency signals that other systems will not receive.

TO WHOM DO YOU REPORT

Making a report requires that you know what to report, how to report it, and to whom to make the report. The following table provides general guidance for the monitor in making a report. However, the specific agencies you should contact and the telephone numbers to use should be established by a memorandum of agreement or understanding between your team and the appropriate agencies in your community.

Radio Service	Report To
Amateur Radio	(1) Calls reporting highway accidents, incidents, hazards, medical emergencies, criminal incidents, aircraft crashes, or boating accidents to the local public safety answering point.
Citizens Band	
Family Radio Service (FRS)	
General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS)	(2) In a disaster calls reporting disaster impacts or citizen needs for assistance as specified in your memorandum of agreement with the local emergency management agency.
Multi-Use Radio Service (MURS)	
Personal Locator Beacon	To the law enforcement or search and rescue agency responsible for a recreational area, preserve, forest, or park or to a public safety answering point
Aircraft Emergency Locator Transmitter	To the nearest Federal Aviation Administration Flight Service Station
Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon	To the nearest law enforcement agency or to the nearest US Coast Guard unit.

WHAT IS YOUR COVERAGE?

If you know the coverage of your base monitoring station you have a better basis for planning your monitoring activities to ensure coverage of specific areas. In some cases, you can compare the coverage of two base stations to generally determine where a lost individual is located. And if you are asked to monitor in a disaster from a deployed site, knowing how wide your coverage will be lets you determine the height of mast and the height of terrain you will need to accomplish the mission.

To determine approximately how far the signal from an antenna of a specific height above terrain will cover, you will need to do some basic mathematical computations. Any good calculator should accomplish these computations. For a single antenna the process is:

- (1) Divide the height in feet of the antenna by 0.5736 = X
- (2) Find the square root of X = distance in miles to the horizon
- (3) Multiply the distance in miles to the horizon by 1.15 = estimated radio horizon

Note that the result is an estimated value. Intervening terrain and electromagnetic interference may reduce this coverage.

If you are providing relay transmissions to another radio station the calculation must include the height of both antennas:

- (1) Multiply the square root of the height of antenna 1 by 1.415
- (2) Multiply the square root of the height of antenna 2 by 1.415
- (3) Add the resulting numbers to find the approximate distance over which the two stations can communicate.

This calculation is based on both radio stations being at the same level. If one station is higher than the other (on top of a hill for example) the terrain difference should be added to that antenna height.

Many local factors may alter these estimated coverages. If your Team has monitoring from base stations as a significant capability, it may be to your advantage to spend the time to have one or more members drive throughout the coverage area to plot when they can and cannot communicate with the base stations. The result will be a coverage map reasonably accurate for local conditions.

III. MONITORING PROCEDURES

STATION IDENTIFICATION

REACT stations on duty should identify with their REACT team name and unit number on Citizens Band, Family Radio Service, and Multi-Use Radio Service. Thus:

- *This is High Country REACT Unit 1.*

On Amateur and General Mobile Radio Service frequencies REACT stations should identify with their call sign and identification that they are a REACT station. Thus:

- *This is KN4EFM High Country REACT Unit 1. (Amateur)*
- *This is WQZN678 High Country REACT Unit 1. (GMRS)*

THE CALL

Monitors should adhere to good practices in emergency radio communications at all time:

- (1) Speak clearly and at a moderate speed.
- (2) Short sentences, uncomplicated language, focused on the information needed for an emergency services response.
- (2) Use plain language – do not use 10 codes or Q signals.
- (3) Avoid use of slang or colloquialisms.
- (4) Record the details of the call as it is received on a call form.

When a call is received you can expect that it will not conform to any standard format. REACT used to emphasize an emergency report format based on CLIP (call sign or name or handle, location, number of injured and degree of injury if any, and the type of problem). Be certain that you recognize whether these elements are present, and work to get the details that are missing. A typical call might be:

- *Is anyone listening? There is a bad accident out here, and we need help.*

If this call is made on Amateur or GMRS frequencies the caller should already have given you their call sign. If not it is a missing item, along with the location, injuries, and more detail on the problem. So you answer:

- *Station calling, this is High Country REACT Unit 1, where is the accident?*

You have answered the call, identified your station, and asked the location. If the next transmission is the location, you have enough to make a report to a public safety answering point if communications fail.

- *REACT, the accident is around mile 27 on Interstate 412.*

That is close to what you need, but on an Interstate you really need the direction of travel for access.

- *Which direction on Interstate 412?*

You can then ask the other obvious questions.

- *How many injured?*
- *How many vehicles are involved?*
- *What is your name or handle?*

Each call will be slightly different, so the monitor must tailor the questions to the incident. When you have the basics, tell the calling station that you are notifying the emergency services. It is a good practice to ask the station to remain on the channel in case dispatch needs added information.

- *I am notifying 9-1-1 now. Please stay on the channel if you can safely in case the dispatcher has any questions.*

When you have completed the call to the public safety answering point, release the caller:

- *Bob, this is REACT. Emergency Services notified, thank you, and you are clear to continue your trip. High Country REACT Unit 1 monitoring.*

Ending a call can be done with a variety of terms. We recommend “monitoring,” as that is what you are doing. Other terms, “clear” and “out,” may not be understood by someone who is not a regular radio user.

REPORTING

Once you have the information from the caller, make sure it is organized and that you are ready to give the public safety answering point the information their call taker needs.

- Public Safety Answering Point - *What is your emergency?*
- You, the monitor - *Report of a traffic accident, mile marker 27 Interstate 412 eastbound. There are injuries, number unknown. Three vehicles involved. Report received by Citizens Band Channel 9. My name is Frank Smith, and I am a REACT monitor.*

The call taker does not want to have a personal relationship with you over the phone. He or she wants the specific information needed to enter the call in the dispatch software and then to trigger tones sending emergency vehicles out of the house. Public safety answering point operators have a specific standard procedure of what they ask and in what order for each type of call. Go with the flow; don't try to impose your order on their procedures. If the call taker asks for additional information, let them know you will have to ask by radio, and then get it as quickly as possible from the caller. If the call taker issues specific instructions, copy them and pass them to the caller.

CALLS FROM FAR AWAY

There are two types of calls that are effectively from outside your normal coverage area. The first is the transmission that you can hear, but that the other station gives no sign that they can hear you. This may be due to difference in the antenna polarization, antenna height, squelch adjustment, or any of a number of other issues. Under these conditions:

- (1) Copy down all details that the other station transmits.

(2) Transmit that you have heard the other station and ask for any additional information you need. If the station hears you weakly or cannot understand parts of your message, repeat in short blocks of words multiple times.

(3) Report what you have heard, including that you have not been able to establish reliable two-way communications. There is some chance that other information that has been reported to the public safety answering point will allow a response.

(4) Transmit to the other station that their call has been heard and reported.

(5) Continue to listen. In this situation, the other station may eventually be able to establish communications with you.

Second, under certain conditions radio signals from high frequency radios (a Citizens Band radio operates in the high frequency range of 1 to 30 MHz) can bounce off the ionosphere to be received at a significant distance away. This so-called skip may result in your receiving a transmission from up to 2500 miles distant. Skip can be encountered in both AM and sideband operations in the Citizens Band.

Because transmissions received are from a significant distance, there are two immediate problems:

(1) Is this a valid emergency call for assistance? Especially on the upper or lower sidebands there is some (although not so much as there used to be) activity in foreign languages and in English that mimics amateur radio practice.

(2) Where is it coming from? You may hear unfamiliar locations or highway numbers or mile markers.

If you can establish communications with the calling station, your procedure is to:

(3) Confirm location, including country, state or province, town, etc.

(4) Handle the call as you would any other request for assistance.

(5) Locate the correct agency to which to make a report. Before the Internet this was a challenge. However, today with Google Earth, a variety of mapping programs, and local and state government websites, it may require some Internet searching, but it is considerably easier.

(6) Make the report. Be prepared for the “you are who?” and “you are where?” questions with a bit of disbelief.

If you cannot establish communications do your best to establish a location and the nature of the problem, and report the call as above with the explanation that you are unsure of the location and have not been able to establish reliable communications.

IV. DISASTER MONITORING

As we noted in the beginning of this course, monitors can be used effectively in disasters, especially when the disaster impacts have disrupted normal commercial communications and commercial power. The key roles we can identify are:

(1) Monitoring to assist motorists during evacuations. This should be coordinated with your local emergency management agency so that you can provide current information on evacuation routes, the availability of meals and fuel, and the locations of shelters. Reporting of broken down vehicles or vehicles out of fuel is a high priority, because these types of incidents significantly slow down the throughput of the highway, delaying final completion of the evacuation and exposing evacuees to potentially being trapped on the roadway.

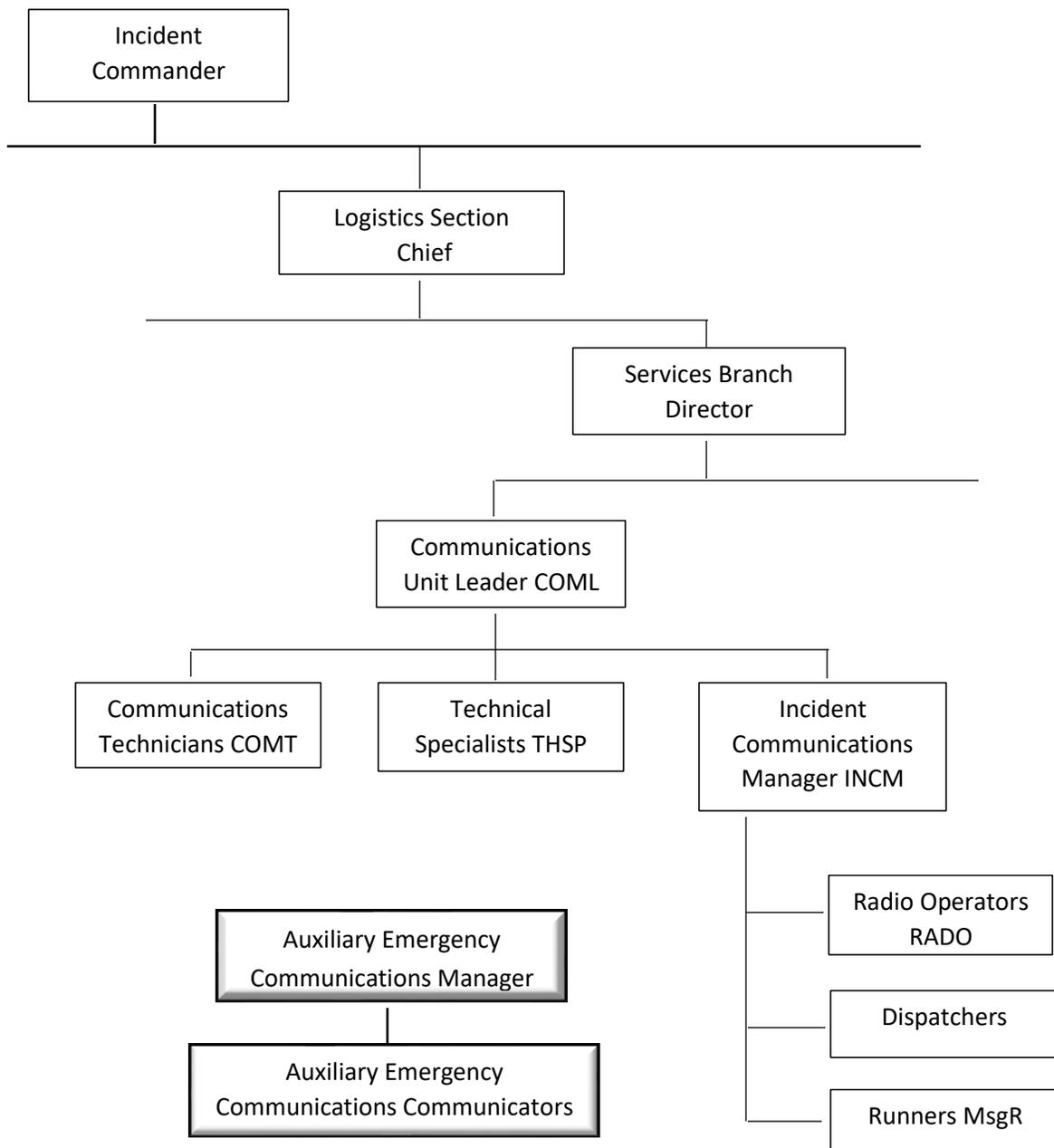
(2) Gathering information on disaster impacts for emergency management. Monitors can listen for and solicit impact reports on flooding, debris, damage to structures, etc. when commercial telephones fail. In addition, they can route calls for assistance to the appropriate agencies.

(3) Providing instructions to incoming relief trucks. This requires monitoring and regular announcements on Citizens Band Channel 19 on primary access routes to the disaster area. This should be coordinated with the local emergency management agency to determine where these trucks should be routed to for unloading, as well as information the drivers will need on fuel and meal availability.

All three of these functions require advanced planning. Your team must coordinate with your emergency management agency to determine how your capabilities will match with their needs. You should have public education materials available and included in local emergency services public events to educate the public on how to contact your Team in a disaster. You should have stock handouts that could be faxed to truck stops on logical routes into your area to alert drivers of your monitor’s availability to assist them in reaching their destinations.

HOW DOES THE MONITOR FIT INTO THE ICS?

The Incident Command System (ICS) is the national standard way of organizing response to emergency incidents of any type and size. ICS assigns the communications function to a Communications Unit in the Services Branch within the Logistics Section (one of the four major divisions of the incident staff). However, once the organization chart gets to the level of the Communications Unit, the organizational role of volunteer communicators becomes less clearly defined.



When you look at this organization chart, down at the bottom are a Manager and a Communicator block for Auxiliary Emergency Communications. This includes amateur radio and other radio services that are not normally a part of the public safety and emergency management communications system. Notice that the Manager block is not connected to anything. It actually appears that way in some organization charts. In others, Auxiliary Emergency Communications is considered a Technical Specialist function.

If you are deployed to an Incident Command Post or an Emergency Operations Center to provide monitoring, this means that one of your immediate problems is determining:

- Is there an Auxiliary Emergency Communications Manager,
- How you will fit into the organizational structure, and
- How the calls for assistance or citizen reports of impacts you gather will be processed?

If you are performing the monitoring function from a base station not collocated with the Incident Command Post or an Emergency Operations Center, you will most probably continue to report calls for assistance through your public safety answering point. However, this is not a good destination for reports of impacts by the general public. Where these reports should go should be determined in advance through working with your local emergency manager to define your team's role in a disaster.

V. DON'T DO THESE

Over the years the environment in which monitors work has changed. Practices that made sense in the 1960s and 1970s started to make less sense in the 1990s and now are actually dangerous. We strongly urge you not to do the following:

(1) Be a frequency cop. As a volunteer emergency communicator, you do not own an emergency frequency, and you have no authority to regulate the use of the frequency. If others are using the frequency or channel inappropriately, you can politely ask them to allow you to answer an emergency call, and you can set a good example, but trying to correct them or get them to leave the frequency may well have exactly the opposite outcome.

(2) Call individual vendors of services, such as towing and recovery operators, on behalf of a caller. If the person being assisted fixes their problem and leaves or cannot pay for or refuses services, you may end up with a bill from the vendor.

(3) Respond to the scene from your base station to provide emergency assistance for a highway incident yourself. The reasons not to do this are many:

- If your vehicle is damaged in such a response or you are injured, your insurance company may well decide that your insurance does not cover your actions as a public safety responder. Insurance policies, unless you ask for specific added insurance, are generally not written to include emergency response.
- Even trained state troopers with long experience in highway incidents are, with some frequency, hit and injured or killed by other motorists while working on scene to assist a motorist at an accident or disabled vehicle.
- You have no authority at an accident scene other than that of any ordinary citizen. If your well-meaning actions contribute to injury to the victim or create additional accidents or injuries, you may be held financially or legally liable. Good Samaritan protections are not absolute and vary from state to state.
- Your vehicle on scene may impede the parking and operations of other emergency vehicles.
- You are exposed to possible criminal actions – ambush shootings of responders do happen, and good Samaritans have been the victims of carjackings.
- You become one more person on scene that the responding agency has to identify and control, adding to the responder's work load.

(4) Stop at an accident scene if you observe one while you are driving. See the items in (3) above. Go to a point where you can safely pull off the road, call 9-1-1 with your cell phone, and follow the standard procedures for passing a report to a public safety answering point. Then safely reenter traffic, and proceed on your way.

(5) Operate on frequencies or channels for which you do not hold a license if a license is required. Although FCC rules permit wide latitude in emergency situations, state laws have generally restricted this to prohibit individuals who are not members of a public safety agency from using public safety frequencies, even in an emergency. Having public safety frequencies programmed in your radio has been

seen by the court in at least one jurisdiction as being evidence of deliberate intent to violate the law. And that is not a good thing.

VI. KEEPING RECORDS

If you monitor you should keep records of your monitoring. There are three reasons that you should record and preserve data about what you do:

1. Record details on calls received as they are received. This ensures that you do not forget the call between the time you receive it and the time you make contact with the public safety answering point. Yes, it is only a minute, but under the stress of the event you will forget. It happens to all of us.

2. Preserve records for legal purposes. Your monitoring log is a contemporary legal record of what you did, when you did it, the conditions at the time, etc. If you end up in court, your log is a critical document to refer to when testifying, to prove what you did or did not do, etc. Most states have statutes of limitation for record retention, but a wise policy is to retain records indefinitely.

3. Document your volunteer service. This may be valuable for younger members for employment purposes and for all members to qualify for volunteer service recognition awards.

Attached to this course booklet are two forms, a monitor log and an incident report form. Use them as printed, modify them for your local conditions, design your own, or use previous forms provided by REACT. Whatever you do, keep records of what you do.

REACT MONITOR LOG		Year	Month	Day	Page No.
Location:					
Base:	Mobile:	Radio Service:		Channel/Frequency:	
Team:		Operator:		Unit No./Call Sign:	

Time:	On duty and monitoring.	
		Report Code:
	Off duty and station closed.	Total time:
This is a correct record of my service as a monitor on this date.		Signed:

<i>INCIDENT REPORT</i>		Year	Month	Day	Call No.
REACT Station Location:					
Base:	Mobile:	Radio Service:		Channel/Frequency:	
Team:		Operator:		Unit No./Call Sign:	

Report Contents:

Call sign or name:		Time:
Location as reported:		
Are there injuries - YES		Number injured: Severity:
NO		
What is the problem?		

Report Coding for Monitor Log

1 – Vehicle accident	12 – Mass casualty	23 - Hurricane
2 – Vehicle immobile	13 – Criminal activity	24 - Tornado
3 – Vehicle fire	14 – Medical emergency	25 - Earthquake
4 – Traffic hazard	15 – Missing person	26 - Landslide
5 – Road blocked	16 – Boating accident	27 - Wind event
6 – Road delay	17 – Aircraft accident	28 - Flooding
7 - Driver assistance	18 – Evacuation	29 - Severe weather
8 – Impaired driver	19 - Structure collapse	30 - Winter weather
9 – Vehicle trapped	20 - Structural fire	31 - Hail
10 – Debris in road	21 - Hazmat	32 – Wildland Fire
11 – Power outage	22 - Explosion	33 - Other

Call Disposition

To:	Time:	Telephone No:
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Monitor Signature:

FORM INSTRUCTIONS

General rules for all forms:

- Complete the form in ink. If there is an error or correction, strike through the incorrect information, enter the correct information, and initial the correction.
- Fill in all boxes. If something the form asks for does not apply in this situation, enter “not applicable” or “N/A.” Doing so shows that you have considered the item and made a decision that it was unnecessary.
- Unknown is a good answer. If you do not know the information, do not guess or make it up. Enter “unknown” in the box.
- Do it as it happens. Writing something on a form would seem like it slows you down in the midst of a terrible emergency. It does. But if a minute later you need the information and have forgotten it (stress plays tricks on short term memory) the time writing it down would have been well spent.
- Be legible. Don’t use abbreviations that are not absolutely commonplace. Try to spell correctly. You will not be able to understand badly scribbled abbreviations you made up on the spot if you have to testify in court a year later. Your logs and incident records are legally discoverable. The better they are to start with, the better you will be if you need them.

The top section of both forms is almost the same:

- **Year – Month – Day:** enter the current date on both forms.
- **Page No.:** on the REACT Monitor Log form enter the sequential page number either for the log for an individual day or for a month or year.
- **Call No.:** on the Incident Report form enter the sequential number of the call as received either for the individual day, month, or year.
- **REACT Station Location:** the address or other location of your station at the time.
- **Base – Mobile:** check whether your station was operating as a base station or a mobile station.
- **Radio Service:** is this for Citizens Band, Amateur Radio, General Mobile Radio Service, Family Radio Service, or emergency beacon monitoring?
- **Channel/Frequency:** enter the channel or frequency monitored
- **Team:** enter your team name and number
- **Operator:** enter your name
- **Unit No./Call Sign:** for Amateur and GMRS enter your FCC call sign. For CB and FRS enter your Team assigned unit number.

On the REACT Monitor Log form:

- **Time:** enter the time of each significant event. Best practice is to use 24 hour clock time in your local time.
- In the center column enter details of your monitoring – calls received (call number from the Incident Report, location, brief description), unusual propagation, equipment problems, other operators present, etc.
- **Report Code:** enter the primary report code from the Incident Report. This will allow you to more easily locate events of a specific type in the log.
- **Total Time:** enter the number of hours and minutes from the start of monitoring to the end of entries on the page.
- **Signed:** sign each log form, verifying that it is correct to the best of your knowledge.

On the Incident Report:

- **Call sign or name:** enter the identification of the station that made the call – call sign, name, handle, club identification, etc.
- **Time:** the time you first hear the call.
- **Location as reported:** enter the location with as much detail as possible including highway name or number, mile marker, direction of travel, street address, or landmark description.
- **Are there injuries?** If the caller reports injuries check YES, if the caller reports no injuries check NO, if the caller is unsure place a letter U in both blocks.
- **Number injured:** enter the number of individuals the caller reports as injured.
- **Severity:** enter the severity of injuries if described by the caller.
- **What is the problem?** Based on the caller's description identify the type of event being reported. Include any details such as degree of damage, extent of the event, intensity of the event, whether the event is still ongoing, etc.
- **Report Coding:** check the best description of the event. The code can be entered on the Monitor Log, and the numerical coding allows you to track how many of each type of event you work.
- **Call Disposition – To:** enter the agency or public safety answering point that you contacted to report the call.
- **Call Disposition – Time:** enter the time when you contacted the agency or public safety answering point.

- **Call Disposition – Telephone No.:** – enter the telephone number of the agency or public safety answering point you contacted.
- **Monitor Signature:** sign the report verifying that you worked the call.