
Cupertino Amateur Radio Emergency Service

Topic: Handling Spontaneous Volunteer Ham Operators

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Event: CARES Monthly Meeting, Orientation Training

Handling Spontaneous Volunteer Ham Operators

Overview

Situation in Cupertino

- CARES has 67 licensed amateur radio operators on its roster.
- There are another 230+ ham radio operators in Cupertino. This is a similar situation in other South Bay cities.
- Even if 10% of them (the 230+ Cupertino hams) are still active and know the CARES frequency, that's ~23 operators that potentially could show up and not know our policies, methods, and procedures on which CARES members have been training.

Questions:

- What should CARES do about...
 1. Spontaneous ham volunteers now?
 2. spontaneous ham volunteers who show up on our net during an emergency?

Overview

What is Spontaneous Volunteer?

- volunteers who are not pre-trained and come forward to help after an emergency or disaster.

Who has a vested interest in this issue?

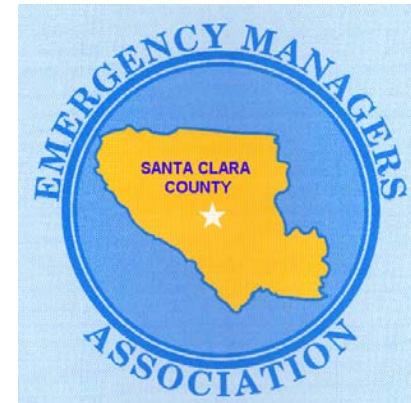
- Santa Clara County Emergency Managers Association
- Volunteer Center of Silicon Valley
- Santa Clara County RACES
- City RACES organizations

Who is Involved?

Santa Clara County Emergency Managers Association (SCC-EMA)

Who is the EMA?

- A committee whose membership consists of the managers of all city Offices of Emergency Services in the County, the manager of the County Office of Emergency Services, and the Emergency Managers of allied organizations.
- The EMA is responsible for developing the structure and standard operating procedures for the Santa Clara County Operational Area.
- ARES/RACES is represented on the EMA by the District Emergency Coordinator/Chief Radio Officer.



Who is Involved?

Volunteer Center of Silicon Valley (VCSV)

Who is the VCSV?

- A non-profit organization that provides information and referral resources within Santa Clara County and the greater Silicon Valley.
- A clearinghouse that mobilizes and links the talents and time of diverse volunteers to help meet critical needs in the community.

Core Services

- Information and Referral Services
 - Youth, Senior, Corporate volunteerism
- Emergency Information and Referral Services
 - emergency preparedness training programs and tailored disaster response and recovery volunteer services
- Sponsors of the Human Race, a community-wide fundraising and community service promotion event
- For more information: <http://www.vcsv.us/>



*Connecting Volunteers
with Community Needs*



At the County Level...

Emergency Volunteer Center (EVC) Plan Summary

Background

The EMA has partnered with the Volunteer Center of Silicon Valley to develop the following:

- The *Countywide Plan for Coordinating Spontaneous Volunteers*
- The *Emergency Volunteer Center (EVC) Plan Template for Local Government*, first published in 2004
- These documents address Spontaneous Volunteers... volunteers who are not pre-trained and come forward to help after an emergency or disaster.

Purpose

- The EVC Plan describes how a city will activate and operate an Emergency Volunteer Center at a local or regional level for the purpose of providing intake and referral services for spontaneous volunteers in Santa Clara County.

At the County Level...

EVC Plan Summary

Plan Objectives

- Outlines standardized processes and procedures for establishing and managing Emergency Volunteer Centers.
- Provides standardized materials and forms to support easier referral and placement of spontaneous volunteers throughout the county.
- Facilitates the sharing of resources and mutual aid for the management of spontaneous volunteers.

Plan Alignment

- The plan was developed to operate within SEMS. The volunteer management usually falls in the Logistics section in the local government SEMS structure.
- EVCs work within the SEMS structure of their local jurisdictions.

At the County Level...

EVC Plan Summary

Risk Management

- The role of the EVC is to refer volunteers to other organizations who may want to use disaster volunteers.
- All utilizing agencies or organizations assume responsibility for their volunteers.
- The *Volunteer Intake Form* (EVC Form 1) is designed to gather enough information to make an appropriate referral.
- The EVC does not verify licenses, conduct background checks, etc.
- The city accepting and registering volunteers assumes all liability for placing, training and supervising these volunteers.
- Properly registered volunteers who are injured performing disaster service work are covered by the State of California Workers' Compensation Insurance.
- Insurance coverage requires adequate supervision and training for disaster volunteers.

At the County Level...

EVC Plan Summary

Individual Activation

- Cities may activate and handle the management of spontaneous volunteers on their own.
- Cities may also request the Volunteer Center to activate, manage, and/or support operations in their city for a localized incident.

Regional Activation

- See next page

Countywide Activation

- Numerous jurisdictions are affected and a request to activate comes to VCSV from the County Operational Area.
- Countywide EVC activations may take place simultaneously with independent municipal operations.

At the County Level...

EVC Plan Summary

Regional Activation Plan

- Cities combine and leverage resources to activate within a region, or on their own with support from the Volunteer Center (if possible).
- A regional activation identifies one lead city and an Emergency Volunteer Center would be established to serve multiple cities within the region.

Northern	*Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Palo Alto, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills
Western	*Campbell, Saratoga, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Cupertino
Southern	Gilroy, *Morgan Hill
Central/Eastern	Santa Clara, San Jose, Milpitas, *Volunteer Center
* Indicates lead city or organization in each region with a site identified for a regional EVC.	

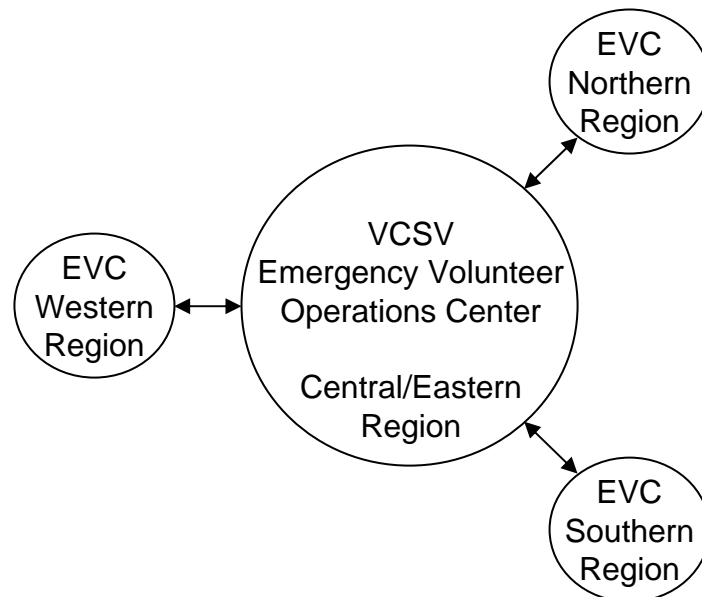
At the County Level...

EVC Plan Summary

Mutual Aid

- Mutual aid requests for staffing EVCs are made to the County Operational Area.
- VCSV will serve as the POC for coordinating mutual aid at a countywide level.

Regional Plan for Spontaneous Volunteers



At the County Level...

EVC Plan

Other Notes

- EVCs are physical locations that may include the capacity for walk-in centers, phone banks, online registration, or a combination of all three.
- The EVC plan has successfully undergone a couple of table top exercises to confirm how it works.
- The EVC Plan is designed to handle spontaneous volunteers after there has been time to establish the Emergency Volunteer Centers, and is not designed to handle the SUV response during the first several hours (or days) of an event.

At the County Level...

Santa Clara County RACES

Background

- County RACES has developed a Procedure titled “Procedure for Using Spontaneous Ham Volunteers During Disasters”
- Hams do not need to be registered as Disaster Service Workers (DSWs) to report what they see and experience; however, they cannot be given any assignment until they have been registered as DSWs.

Opportunity

- Use the inherent capabilities of ham radio operators – the ability to report situation information rapidly and professionally from a wide range of locations early in an event.
- Report observations to the city and/or county directly using the Santa Clara County ARES/RACES Resource Net that is put in operation immediately upon occurrence of a major event or disaster.

At the County Level...

Santa Clara County RACES

Proposed Procedure

1. All spontaneous ham volunteers should be directed to the County Resource Net, where they will be asked to report what they have seen, heard, and experienced in the event/disaster.
2. As city emergency nets become operational and report to County, County Net directs spontaneous volunteer hams to move to their respective city RACES nets to report their disaster-related information. Once delivered, spontaneous volunteer hams should move back to the County Resource Net.
3. Cities may ask County for mutual aid. For a wide-spread disaster, no other city-trained mutual aid responders may be available since they will be responding to their own city.

At the County Level...

Santa Clara County RACES

Proposed Procedure (continued)

4. In the event of extensive road and highway damage, County Resource Net may direct spontaneous volunteers to contact the EC closest to the volunteer. Volunteers would need to be quickly trained by the city EC, and registered as a DSW by the city that would use the volunteer.
5. In the event roads are passable, ham volunteers...
 - can be directed to the Santa Clara County OES
 - are trained using the Santa Clara County ARES/RACES Quick Trainer
 - registered as DSWs by Santa Clara County OES
 - instructed to monitor the Resource Net for assignment as needed
6. When the Emergency Volunteer Centers become operational, ham volunteers can then be directed to these centers for registration and training.

At the County Cities Level...

Based on a survey of cities in Santa Clara County

Background

- South Bay cities and RACES groups are at different levels of understanding on how to deal with spontaneous volunteer (SUV) ham radio operators.

Identified approaches

- City #1: Previously performed a mass mailing to reach out to unaffiliated city ham radio operators. The plan: get them to a meeting and do some fundamental training ahead of time.
- City #2: Their unofficial policy: let new people check in, stay in their homes, and report what they see from their front yards.
- City #3: Direct SUVs who show up at the EOC or on the city net to their SUV center at city hall for DSW enrollment.

At the County Cities Level...

Based on a survey of cities in Santa Clara County

Identified approaches

- City #4, 6: If a new ham checks in from his/her car or home with valuable information, NCO will take the report. If the presence of the new ham becomes key to the operation, then replace him/her with a RACES member as soon as possible.
- City #5: When a new ham checks in in person or on the net, direct them to the convergent volunteer group at the city's community center.
- City #7, 8: no approach defined.

At the CARES Level...

What this means for CARES

Our Objectives

- Take advantage of additional reports that may be out there.
- Minimize message handling frustration, interference, and operational inefficiencies.

At the CARES Level...

Plan for CARES

What can we do now...

1. Mass-mailing to Cupertino hams. Invite to attend a 1-2 hour CARES orientation (with no commitment required to join).
2. Update the CARES SOP to reflect handling of Spontaneous Volunteer hams.
3. Work handling spontaneous ham volunteers into our drills.
4. Others?

At the CARES Level...

Plan for CARES

What should we do during an emergency?

1. Take their report and thank them.
2. Do not give them a field assignment.
3. If asked what they can do next...
 - Let them know the location and when the closest Regional EVC opens, or if Cupertino opens a city EVC.
 - Do not tell them to go anywhere or do anything (may constitute an assignment).
 - Let them know what is available (makes it their choice for action).
4. Others?

At the CARES Level...

Plan for CARES

Pending decisions

1. Do we let CARES and spontaneous ham volunteers operate on the same CARES emergency net?
2. Do we consider a [short-term] spontaneous ham volunteer net to keep the CARES emergency net focused and efficient?
3. To what extent do we provide on-air coaching? How?
4. How do we prioritize structured vs. unstructured PSA traffic?
5. Others?

NOTE: To be updated once all feedback is received and the CARES operational processes are updated.

