

Messaging 101

Another look at message passing

January 5, 2023
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CARES mission

The mission of Cupertino Amateur Radio Emergency Service (CARES) is to maintain and train Amateur Radio volunteers capable of providing professional emergency communications, increasing the City's emergency response effectiveness, and speeding the recovery effort.



Topics for tonight

1. Why talk about Message Passing
2. What are the rules
3. Forms
4. Prowords
5. Want to learn more?



Why talk about message handling?

- This is what we do, but not that often
- Do we have a process? Is one necessary?
- Lots of forms and options
- Many methods for passing a message, which one to use?
- A lot of what we do depends on the situation we might encounter
- ...



Who you may encounter

You are assigned to provide backup communications for whoever needs communications help...

- CERT responders
- Walk-up residents
- Drive-by residents
- ARK staff
- Shelter staff
- Temporary Evacuation Point staff
- Fire Station staff
- EOC, DOC
- Shadow assignment
- Others?



What you could encounter

... and each is likely to have a different situation...

1. Someone needs help
2. Someone needs “things”
3. Someone needs information
4. Someone observed ‘something’
5. Someone needs to tell the city something
6. You need to pass your own messages



What you could encounter

... and each situation will have its own special message...

1. *Someone needs help*

- Tree down blocking the street
- Neighbor is trapped in their house
- Gas leak somewhere on your street
- A neighbor is injured
- Smoke coming from a neighbor's garage
- Auto accident with casualties
- Water running out from a garage
- ...



What you could encounter

... and each situation will have its own special message...

2. *Someone needs “things”*

- Neighborhood needs a chain saw
- Valley Water needs barricades due to street flooding
- ARK needs fuel for generators
- ...



What you could encounter

... and each situation will have its own special message...

3. *Someone is looking for information*

- Are there any shelters open?
- When will the power be back on?
- Where can I charge my cell phone?
- Where can I get sandbags?
- Where can I stable my horses?
- What is our evacuation status?
- ...



What you could encounter

... and each situation will have its own special message...

4. *Someone observed 'something' (that needs attention)*

- Sewage leaking from a manhole cover
- Power pole transformer is on fire
- Water main break, gushing up from a street
- Power lines down across the road, sparking
- Stream is flooding the street
- Smoke is rising from the southwest
- Landslide blocking the street
- Smell of natural gas
- ...



What you could encounter

... and each situation will have its own special message...

5. Someone needs to tell the city something

- Status at the fire station
- Request additional communications support
- Field staffing levels
- Power is being turned off in 30 minutes
- ...



What you could encounter

... and each situation will have its own special message...

6. *You need to pass your own messages*

- Check-in message
- Health & Welfare response
- Inquiry on the shift change
- Request extra staffing
- Check-out message
- ...



And, how do we do that?

Plenty of different methods, and forms

1. On the radio by voice or packet?
2. Formal messages that need to be accurately delivered
3. Informal messages that you originate or is given to you by someone else
4. Operational messages (Operator-to-Operator) are between you and Net Control.



What are the rules?

1. *No, it is not a Message if...*

- In the field, you will see a lot and hear a lot; not everything is a message.
- Someone is looking for information and you DO know the answer.
- A neighborhood reports that everything is ok.
- Someone needs assistance and the ARK resources can handle it.
- Someone needs assistance that is not a priority right now.
- Use your best judgement.



What are the rules?

2. *Yes, it is a Message if...*

- Phone service is out and someone needs help from Fire, Sheriff, EMS, or Public Works.
- A neighborhood reports 2 houses are on fire.
- Someone is looking for information and you DO NOT know the answer.
- Someone needs assistance that cannot be addressed locally.
- Someone needs to notify the ICP or EOC of something important.
- A situation where, if left unattended, will cause the problem to get worse.
- Use your best judgement.



What are the rules?

3. *And if it is a Message, then is or Voice or Packet?*

Packet

- Best for long, complex, and/or high-volume messages
- Pre-build forms (like County PackItForms)
- Explicit acknowledgments, logging, tracking

Voice

- Short messages
- Time sensitive
- Used to notify of a sent Urgent packet message
- And, how much formality with creating the message?
 - Formal, 3rd Party
 - Informal
 - Operator-to-Operator



How to decide what to do?

Message basics:

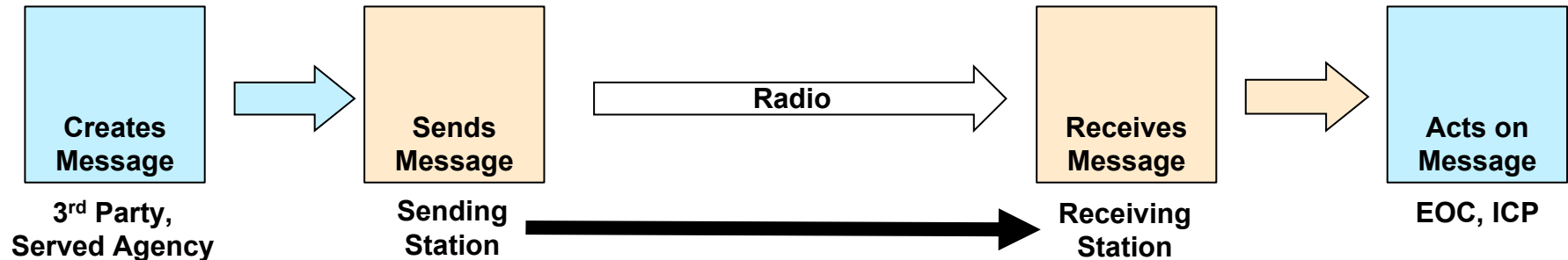
1. Who is originating it
2. Determine where it is going
3. Take the message
4. How long is the message
5. How complicated is the message
6. What is the priority of the message

Then, determine how to send it.



Formal, 3rd Party Messages

What are the rules?



- 3rd party messages are handled by amateur radio operators on behalf of others
- Official communications between 2 parties, is traceable, and has clear from and to addresses.
- The 3rd party determines:
 - Message format (usually some type of form used by that agency)
 - Message content (often including unfamiliar terms)
 - Message to/from information (typically, an ICS position and location)
 - Message handling order (how quickly they need it sent)

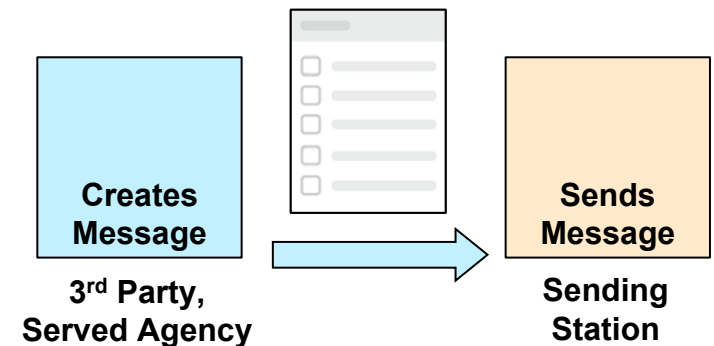


Formal, 3rd Party Messages

What are the rules?

3rd Party, Written

- Messages that are written down and handed to us. Ex: ICS-213 and other forms, message written on plain paper
- If not on our form, help the author get it on the correct form.
- Or, staple their writeup to the appropriate form
- Examples
 - Any ICS form sent to the County
 - Messages from a city-run shelter to City EOC
 - Local Allied Health Status Report to County Medical Health Operations Center
- And, log all messages on your ICS 309 Comm Log!

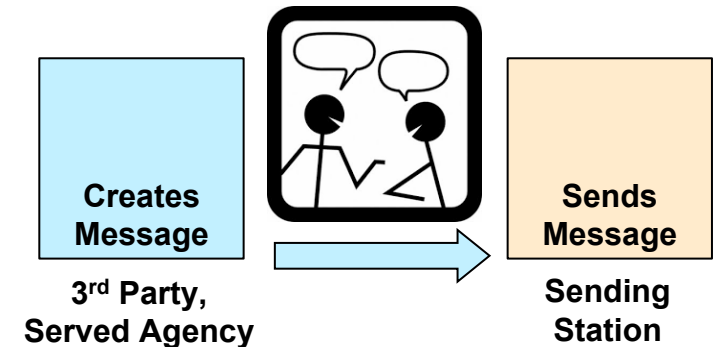


Formal, 3rd Party Messages

What are the rules?

3rd Party, Spoken

- For simple spoken messages, no need for a message form.
- Examples
 - Virtually all messages to/from shadows
 - Brief messages where the content is not critical
 - Others?



*Aren't these really **Informal Messages**?*



What are the rules?

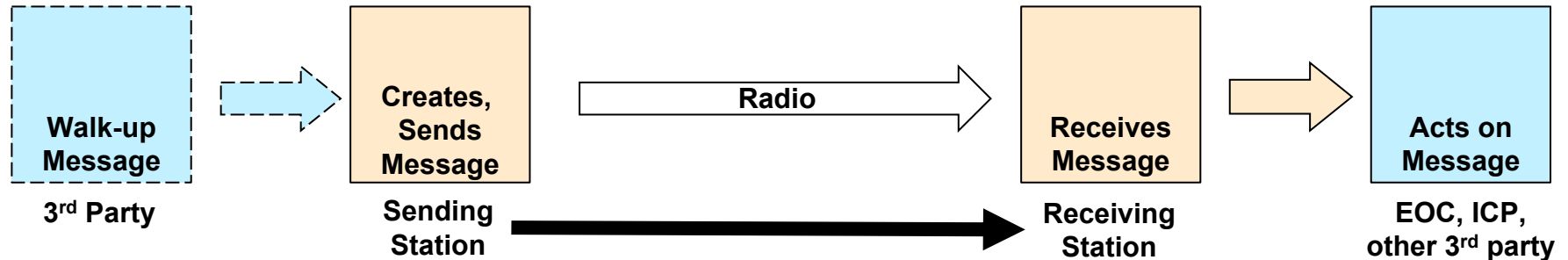
4. *Formal Messages ...*

- a) Could be a formal notification of something from the sending agency to the receiving agency (ICP or EOC).
- b) If an agency rep hands you a filled-in message form, then send it as a formal message.
- c) If an agency rep hands you a message on a piece of paper and tells you to send it exactly, then you should copy it or attach it to an ICS 213 message form, work with the sender on the from/to fields, and send it as a formal message.
- d) Do not write formal messages on the CARES COES 213SF Short form
- e) Don't forget packet radio for long and/or complex messages
- f) And, log all messages on your ICS 309 Comm Log!



Informal Messages

What are the rules?



- Informal messages make up 98% of the messages we will pass.
- They are self-originated messages, or from a walk-up individual, or from FRS/GMRS reports you deem important to send to the EOC.
- These messages may or may not be written and a response may not be required. In this case, **you control what the message text will be**
- The message is passed to the EOC/ICP for their information or action
- Examples
 - 3rd Party spoken, short messages
 - ISA Reports
 - Smoke/Ember Reports
 - Stream flow Reports
 - Alt 911 messages
 - Questions or reports from the public
 - Other general observation



What are the rules?

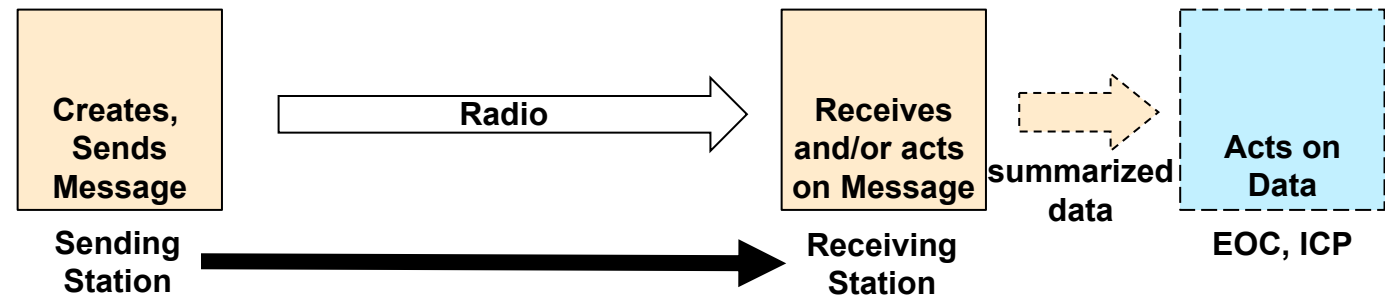
5. *Informal Messages...*

- a) Use CARES specific message forms such as ALT911, Smoke/Ember Watch, or COES 213SF Short Form to record the facts and gist of the message.
- b) Use local CERT intake forms to record ARK-specific field events.
- c) If another agency rep verbally tells you to have “Dave call me at 408-555-1212”, then this as an Informal message.
- d) IF another agency rep verbally tells you a message that is longer or more complicated,
OR if it needs routing information for delivery outside the radio room,
OR if the message should be tracked,
THEN this is not an informal message. Write it down on the appropriate form; handle as a Formal, 3rd Party message.
- e) Do not write informal messages on the County forms
- f) And, log all messages on your ICS 309 Comm Log!



Operator-to-Operator Messages

What are the rules?



- Self-originated messages
- Sent from you to other amateur radio operators, such as:
 - Check-in/Out
 - Health & Welfare
 - Status Updates
 - Questions to the NCO, Shift Supervisor, or other station
- A summary of specific information may be forwarded to a 3rd party, such as:
 - Rolled up Damage Assessment
 - Crowd or car count
 - Mike-Mike report summary



What are the rules?

6. Operator-to-Operator Messages...

- a) Most of these messages have a structured format (check-in, Check-out, H&W checks, etc.). Follow procedures!
- b) If you originate the message, send it as an operator-to-operator message.
- c) And, log all messages on your ICS 309 Comm Log!



What does this mean for us?

1. Between the City and the County, the bulk of the messages we will pass will be formal 3rd party messages.
2. The few places in the city where we would pass formal 3rd party messages are:
 - Skilled Nursing (Allied Health) facilities
 - City-run shelter messages
3. Within the City, the bulk of the messages we will pass will be informal messages.

	Message / Information	Voice	Packet
Formal, 3rd Party	ICS 213 Message Form	Y	Y
	XSC EOC-213RR Resource Request	Y	Y
	XSC OA Jurisdiction Status Form	Y	Y
	XSC OA Shelter Status Form	Y	Y
	XSC Allied Health Facility Status	Y	Y
	XSC RACES Mutual Aid Request		Y
Informal	3rd Party spoken, short messages	Y	
	ISA Reports	Y	
	Smoke/Ember Reports	Y	
	Stream flow Reports	Y	
	Alt 911 messages	Y	Y
	Questions or reports from the public	Y	
	Other general observation	Y	
	COES 213SF Short Message Form	Y	
Operator-to-Operator	Check-in/Out	Y	Y
	Health & Welfare	Y	
	Status Updates	Y	Y
	Questions to NCO, Shift Sup, or others	Y	
	Rolled up Damage Assessment	Y	
	Crowd or car count	Y	
	Mike-Mike report summary	Y	



Forms, forms, forms

- Santa Clara County RACES
- Cupertino ARES



SCC County Forms

MESSAGE FORM For paper: use ballpoint pen – blue or black ink only (See back for instructions)	Origin Msg #: <input type="text"/>	Destination Msg #: <input type="text"/>
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Date:
(mm/dd/yy)

ICS Position:

Location: (req)

Name: (option)

Telephone #: (c)

SUBJECT:

REFERENCE (e.g.,

MESSAGE:

ACTION TAKEN

CC: ☐ Manager

Operator Use Only

Relay: ☐ Rcvd: ☐

How: ☐ Telephone ☐ EOC Radio ☐ Amateur Radio

Outgoing (Sent): ☐ Message Originator
Radio: After sending

Incoming (Received): ☐ Radio: Complete O
Addressee: Take up

County of Santa Clara
Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
Resource Request Form 213RR

Reset Form

1. Incident Name

5. Requested By (name)

6. Prepared by (name)

7. Approved by (name)

Signature:

8. Qty/Unit

13. Delivery

15. Sub

16. Supply

Requesting Agency / EOC Section

Equipment ☐ Fuel ☐ Meals ☐ Water ☐

Last Revised: 8/17

Santa Clara OA Shelter Status

Reset Form WebEOC: 20130814 PDF: 190619

Radio Operator Only: ☐ Origin Msg #: Destination Msg #:

This Section to be Completed by Jurisdiction Personnel: (Underlined=Required)

Date:

ICS Position:

Location:

Name:

Contact Info:

Report Type: ☐ Update ☐ Complete ☐ Important: See Instructions!

Shelter

Shelter Type: (Pick One)

Status: (Pick One)

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Latitude (d.ddd°):

Shelter Information

Capacity:

Occupancy:

Meals Served (Last 24):

NSS Number:

Pet Friendly: ☐

Basic Safety Inspection: ☐

ATC-20 Inspection: ☐

Available Services:

MOU (where/how sent)

Floorplan (where/how)

DEOC-9 ALLIED HEALTH STATUS REPORT SHORT FORM

FACILITY NAME:

Contact Name:

Other Phone, Fax, Cell Phone:

FACILITY STATUS

GREEN- FULLY FUNCTIONAL

RED- LIMITED SERVICES

BLACK- IMPAIRED/CLOSED

FACILITY CONTACT INFORMATION

FACILITY EOC MAIN CONTACT NAME

FACILITY EOC MAIN CONTACT FAX

FACILITY LIAISON OFFICER NAME

PUBLIC HEALTH/MEDICAL HEALTH

FACILITY LIAISON CONTACT NAME

FACILITY INFORMATION OFFICER 1

FACILITY INFORMATION OFFICER 2

FACILITY INFORMATION OFFICER 3

IF FACILITY EOC IS NOT ACTIVATED, CONTACTED FOR QUESTIONS/BREQ

FACILITY CONTACT NUMBER

FACILITY CONTACT EMAIL

FACILITY PATIENT FLOW INFORMATION

FACILITY PATIENTS TO EVACUATE

FACILITY PATIENTS INJURED - MIN

FACILITY PATIENTS TRANSFERRED

OTHER FACILITY PATIENT CARE IN

Santa Clara OA Jurisdiction Status

Reset Form WebEOC: 20190327 PDF: 190528

Radio Operator Only: ☐ Origin Msg #: Destination Msg #:

This Section to be Completed by Jurisdiction Personnel: (Underlined=Required)

Date: Time (24hr): Handling: ☐ Immediate (ASAP) ☐ Priority (<1 hr) ☐ Routine (<2 hr)

ICS Position:

Location:

Name:

Contact Info:

Report Type: ☐ Update ☐ Complete ☐ Important: See Instructions!

Jurisdiction Name:

Contact Information (If Report Type=Complete, then Underline=Required)

EOC Phone: EOC Fax:

Pri EM Contact Name: Pri EM Contact Phone:

Sec EM Contact Name: Sec EM Contact Phone:

Government Office Status (If Report Type=Complete, then Underline=Required)

Office Status: (Pick One) ☐ Unknown (Grey) ☐ Open (Green) ☐ Closed (Red)

Expected to Open Date: Expected to Open Time:

Expected to Close Date: Expected to Close Time:

EOC Status (If Report Type=Complete, then Underline=Required)

EOC Open: (Pick One) ☐ Unknown (Grey) ☐ Yes (Red) ☐ No (Green)

Activation: (Pick One) ☐ Normal (Green) ☐ Duty Officer (Yellow) ☐ Monitor (Orange)

Expected to Open Date: Expected to Open Time:

When would I use SCC County forms?

1. Assigned to the County Net. You may need to pass several different types of forms/messages.
2. Assigned to a skilled nursing facility in Cupertino and need to pass the DEOC-9 Allied Health Status Report Short Form.
3. Assigned to a Red Cross-run shelter and need to send messages to the local Red Cross chapter office
4. Assigned to a City-run shelter and need to send messages to the City EOC or County EOC.
5. If possible, pass these messages by packet where a PackItForm exists. (auto logging, message ID, delivery receipts)
6. We do not use County Forms within Cupertino for informal messages.
7. We do not use Cupertino ARES forms for County formal messages.



Voice Message Passing

and then record the message
on your **ICS 309 Comm Log**

Cupertino ARES/RACES

Voice Message Passing... *thinking out loud*

5 Jan 2023

Messaging 1-1

Cupertino ARES/RACES

ALT911 Message Form

9-1-1 Field Data Collection Form

#31

COMMON	1. What are you reporting? House Fire	5. RP Name: John Smith
	2. Location, Address 1245 Evergreen Road	6. RP Address (optional): 1740 Evergreen Road, Cupertino
	3. City: Cupertino	7. RP Phone (optional): 408-555-1212
	4. Other Location Details (optional):	
	8. Time last seen? (HH:MM) 14:30	
	9. Event / Incident Details Heavy smoke venting from the 2nd floor	



Making an Alt911 Report

Recording the report

This is an **Informal** message.

Record the message on your
ICS 309 Communications Log

9-1-1 Field Data Collection Form				
COMMON	1. What are you reporting? House Fire		5. RP Name: John Smith	
	2. Location, Address 1245 Evergreen Road		6. RP Address (optional): 1740 Evergreen Road, Cupertino	
	3. City: Cupertino		7. RP Phone (optional): 408-555-1212	
	4. Other Location Details (optional):			
	8. Time last seen? (HH:MM) 14:30			
	9. Event / Incident Details Heavy smoke venting from the 2nd floor			
MED	10. Age:	11. Gender:	12. Conscious? (Yes/No)	13. Breathing? (Yes/No)
FIRE	14. If a FIRE, people inside? No			
LAW	15. Person Description:			
	16. Direction of Travel:			17. Weapon Involved?
	18. Vehicle Description:		19. Lic:	20. State:
	21. RP Requests Contact? (Yes/No)			
LGOV	22. <no specific details required>			
Operator Use Only (do not transmit this section with the message):				
Action: Sent / Received (circle one)		Operator Call Sign: KJ6ABC		
Method: Telephone / EOC Radio / Courier / Amateur Radio / Packet / Other		Operator Name: Mike Jensen		
		Date/Time: 04/30/20 14:40		
CUP ALT-911 Field Data Collection Form				

Making a Smoke Report

Recording your observations

Getting ready to make a report...

SMOKE REPORT

Message Number: 31		Location (Tactical Call Sign, usually): Main Street
Bearing: 228.5 degrees	Is it a column?: (circle one) yes no	Size: (circle one) small medium large
Color: (circle one) white gray black yellow _____		Is it building?: (circle one) yes no
Other: (optional) Drifting west		

(Circle one) Sent Received	Date and Time: 5/12/18, 10:45	Name and FCC Call Sign: Mike KJ6ABC
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When would I use CARES forms?

1. We use CARES forms to record information about a specific type of incident.
2. These are mostly Informal messages.
3. Assignments where you might use CARES forms
 - to an ARK
 - to an ALT911 field station
 - on a smoke/ember watch
 - Other observation or public interaction assignments
4. Not all informal messages require a form.
5. We do not use County Forms within Cupertino for informal messages.



Top 4 prowords to learn

<https://www.cupertinoares.org/docs/Message-passing-cheat-sheet.pdf>

I Spell	Spelling a word that's ambiguous or difficult to spell Message says: sine You say: sine, I spell <i>sierra india november echo</i>
Figure or Figures	Message says: Call 911 You say: call, <i>figures niner one one</i> Message says: Date: 11/20/21. Time: 10:25 You say: Date, <i>one one slash two zero slash two one</i> Time, <i>one zero colon two five</i>
Initial(s)	Message says: Position: PGE Supervisor You say: Position, <i>initials papa golf echo</i> Supervisor
Say again...	If you need the sender to repeat some words, say one of the following Say Again all after... Say Again word after... Say Again word before... Say Again between ... and ...



Where do we go from here?

1. **Take a Class.** Best place to learn about County forms is

- SCC RACES Message Passing Class (28 Jan 2023)
- SCC RACES Field Operator III Part A (7 Jan 2023)
- SCC RACES Field Operator III Part B & Part II (4 Feb 2023)

2. **Participate in CARES exercises**

- CARES Field communications exercise Prep (2 Feb 2023)
This includes the specific for passing ALT911 voice and packet messages.
- CARES Field communications exercise, voice (18 Feb 2023)
- CARES Field communications exercise, packet (18 Feb 2023)
- County Quarterly Exercise: Volunteer for the Comm 469 County Net position (25 Feb 2023)



Thank you

Any Questions?

