

Amateurs Need To Learn More

We as amateur should never become complacent with our training or preparation for the future, or do we? Once again 911 (September 11, 2001) is bringing to light the need for communications to be done with plain language. Amateurs who plan on helping during an emergency event need to update their training. Amateur Radio is a commodity that will be needed and used during an incident; therefore we need to be fully trained. FCC Rule 97.1 Basis and purpose states; (a) Recognition and enhancement of the value of the amateur service to the public as a voluntary noncommercial communication service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications. For the past three years we have had the opportunity to take the three courses offered us by the ARRL provide by a grant from Homeland Security. While this was an excellent way for us to learn communications skills for passing traffic and the roles of leadership in the ARRL it has definitely left us unable to communicate with other entities, police and fire departments. So, we will need to step up to the plate and take a couple of additional courses, which are free of course.

As Section Manager (SM), I leave the training of ARES personnel to the Section Emergency Coordinator, Ron Dodson, KA4MAP, who for the past 6 plus years has done an exemplary job. This article is not meant to take from him any of his responsibilities but just to give an overall view from where I sit as SM and a District Emergency Coordinator (DEC) for District 7. District 7 has been given notice by District Emergency Coordinator Rick Watkins, Area 7, that by October 1, 2005 all responding personnel will have to be IS-700 (National Incident Management System) certified. Now you ask, what is IS-700 NIMS and where can it be found? IS-700 NIMS is a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) course that is free to the public. It can be found on the Internet at <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/crslist.asp>. I have asked the amateurs in District 7 to send me a copy of the e-mail that will be sent to them congratulating them on passing the course. When they receive their certificate from FEMA, send me a copy either by e-mail or snail mail. Each county Director will receive a copy of this certificate for their files and future use.

Director Watkins has also asked, but not made mandatory the need for IS-195 (Basic Incident Command System). This is a good course to take if you're not familiar with the command system in an emergency response situation. This course also gives us a good start on IS-700. Knowing who is who in an emergency situation will save you time. Know why they wear the vest they wear and what their responsibilities are and who they report to.

Big Brother, the Federal Government, in the near future will probably be asking us (better stated by telling us) to take IS-800 (National Response Plan). I found this to be an interesting course and one that will take a little time. But all of these courses should be able to be finished in the time allotted.

Amateur Radio operators are never finished learning when it comes to providing a public service. Remember, not only does our family depend on us, but our neighbors and friends also. How much time will you take to become proficient in emergency communications?

73

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