

# **Amateur Radio Hospital Emergency Communications (ARHEC) Process and Procedure**

## **Introduction**

The Amateur Radio Hospital Emergency Communication (ARHEC) is an Amateur Radio service providing trained amateur radio Operators who are members of an Amateur Radio Public Service Corps (ARPSC) serving a State, County, or Municipality with a photo ID issued by the governmental agency.

## **Mission**

Support communications for a medical facility providing emergency communications that are critical to patient health and facility welfare.

## **Objective**

Develop the ARPSC – ARHEC program into a fully integrated medical communications team at medical facilities to provide timely and accurate information to the Emergency Operation Control (EOC) of the State, County, or Municipality being served.

## **Infrastructure**

- Regional Medical Control Authority (MCA) provides information to local ARHEC Coordinator about which medical facility will be equipped for ARHEC.
- MCA reviews cost and installation per ARHEC requirements, develops budgets and purchases equipment.
- MCA, ARHEC and a facility representative will survey the medical facility, and consult on location of the radio station. MCA will advise the facility where they need to install the provided antenna and run the antenna cable to the station location. Station location must have an access to the facility emergency/backup power source.
- ARHEC will install or provide assistance in the final installation of the radio equipment when the antenna and cable are installed.

## Infrastructure (cont.)

- ARHEC is a team process at each medical facility. There is a team leader and 5 to 6 team members. The team leader develops a schedule of when a team member is to do a check in on the last Thursday of the month. The team leader also is the person that the ARHEC Coordinator works with.

## ARHEC Policies

- ARHEC operators will present a professional image in appearance whenever possible (Neat & Clean). Regardless of the time of day or night the amateur radio operators are activated appearance and actions should always be positive.
- Operators should present a professional image by avoiding confrontation with Security & Hospital Staff. If there is a problem, remove yourself from the facility and check in from your vehicle, home base station or phone. Contact ARHEC coordinator or assistant as soon as possible (within 24 hrs) to report the incident. The incident will be reviewed and resolved by the Region MCA and Hospital management.
- ARHEC Station Operators are to use the Medical Facilities name i.e. Huron Valley Sinai Hospital, Commerce Township, Oakland. This is a tactical call sign it describes FUNCTION and LOCATION. When ending each transmission operator's call sign is required. This serves 2 important functions:
  1. It tells the Net Control Station your transmission is complete
  2. It fulfills FCC requirements
- The Hospital Net is a directed net by Net Control. Hospitals report in via Roll Call from Net Control Operators. Net Control will provide directions for different operating modes as needed. Net Control will provide the ARHEC Coordinator with a written report of results from the Hospital Net.

## Procedures

- The governing EOC (County, Districts or State ARPSC) is directed to activate a controlled net at least once a month to do a roll call of medical facilities equipped with ARHEC radios. This net is required to operate from the governing EOC once every 5 months.

## Procedures (cont.)

- The governing EOC contact, the ARPSC EC, or the ARHEC Hospital Coordinator will send out an email to the facilities staff contact as a reminder to expect the ARHEC operators for the volunteers' monthly net.
- ARHEC radio operators will report to their designated hospital before the scheduled net time and inspect the station's connection before activating the station.
- Hospital personnel can verify radio volunteers by their blue & white ARPSC photo ID and/or orange RACES identification card provided by Michigan State Police Department of Homeland Security.
- Hospital personnel shall provide access to the radio and validate/provide tokens for parking or direct amateur radio operator to restricted parking area.
- The ARHEC radio system is intended only for emergency communications that are critical to patient health and facility welfare. Use requires an amateur radio license, granted by United States Federal Communication Commission (FCC).
- Personal messages are not permitted on the ARHEC System. The National Traffic System (NTS) is designed to send these types of messages.
- If ARHEC station is inoperative the Hospital Coordinator or assistance should be contacted for repair coordination.
- The ARHEC system priority is to provide communications via governing EOC (County, Districts or State ARPSC) to obtain medical support that is critical to patient health and facility welfare
- When an ARHEC station operator is requested to provide communications to somewhere other than EOC (Net Control), the operator must request permission from Medical Control at the EOC to go direct, Hospital to Hospital (or site to site).

## Procedures (cont.)

- When permission is granted, the station operator will contact the Second Hospital (or site) and request that they move to a simplex frequency (or another repeater).
- The frequency move is communicated to the EOC, then both ARHEC stations move to the simplex (or another repeater if necessary). The secondary operator at the EOC will monitor this message.
- When the direct communications is concluded, then both hospital ARHEC stations will return to the main frequency and re-check in.
- The ARHEC stations during a directed net are to use Break Tags. They are: answer, question, info, priority, medical, emergency and your station (tactical) call sign and your own (example: Beaumont Troy, Oakland w8wrb).

## Break Tags

Instead of saying 'break' in between transmissions during a directed net you use a Break Tag with your call sign. They are to be used only when your traffic will be appreciated by net control and results in more efficient communications. They are to be used wisely, as net control is directed to stop and turn over the net to the breaker. The message that follows a break should be as short as possible. Here are their intended uses:

**Emergency:** Only to be used to report an ongoing life threatening or property damaging incident.

**Medical:** Used to report a minor medical incident that affects the operator to walk someone with a minor cut over to a med tent.

**Priority:** To be used to report an important but non-life threatening situation such as an accident that just happened.

**Question:** To be used when the answer of a question can't wait. For instance when the Mayor is standing next to you and requested you to get some info using your radio.

**Answer:** To be used when you have the answer to a question currently being discussed on the radio.

## Procedures, Break Tags (cont.)

**Info:** To be used when information needs to be transmitted rapidly but is not related to what is being said on the air. For instance if something that net control needs to know about is going to happen in the next few seconds or if you wait for the end of an exchange it will negate the value of the information.

**Your Call Sign:** An indication that you have traffic that can wait and does not require the stoppage of the ongoing exchange. Using this tag your expectations are you could be put on hold and in queue for your transmission.

This method takes very little training. Its use is contagious and comes very naturally. It will be a part of our communications from here on in.

## Phonetic Alphabet

- The ARHEC Stations are directed to use ITU phonetics to provide ACCURATE EFFICIENT communications.
- International Telecommunications Union (ITU) phonetic alphabet is considered the worldwide standard for military, naval, civilian aeronautical and maritime, search and rescue groups, amateur radio & public safety, (law enforcement being an exception).

A	Alfa	AL FAH	N	November	NO VEM BER
B	Bravo	BRAH VOH	O	Oscar	OSS CAH
C	Charlie	CHAR LEE	P	Papa	PAH PAH
D	Delta	DELL TAH	Q	Quebec	KEH BECK
E	Echo	ECK OH	R	Romeo	Row ME OH
F	Foxtrot	FOKS TROT	S	Sierra	SEE AIR RAH
G	Golf	GOLF	T	Tango	TANG GO
H	Hotel	HOH TELL	U	Uniform	YOU NEE FORM
I	India	IN DEE AH	V	Victor	VIK TAH
J	Juliett	JEW LEE ETT	W	Whiskey	WISS KEY
K	Kilo	KEY LOH	X	X-Ray	ECKS RAY
L	Lima	LEE MAH	Y	Yankee	YANG KEY
M	Mike	MIKE	Z	Zulu	ZOO LOO

If non-standard phonetics is used, it may cause confusion, be misunderstood and possibly delay the communication process.

## Net Schedule, Tactical Call Signs and Contact personnel

### Oakland County:

#### Net Schedule

ARPSC-ARHEC serving Oakland County activates a net on the **Last Thursday** of every month at 7:30 pm. and other times as decided by the group to conduct a simulated emergency test.

#### Tactical Call Signs

- Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak, Oakland
- Beaumont Hospital, Troy, Oakland
- Botsford Hospital, Farmington Hills, Oakland
- Crittenton Hospital, Rochester, Oakland
- Huron Valley Sinai Hospital, Commerce Township, Oakland
- DMC Surgery Hospital, Madison Heights, Oakland
- Ford Medical Center, West Bloomfield, Oakland
- North Oakland Medical Center, Pontiac, Oakland
- Oakland Regional Hospital, Southfield, Oakland
- POH Medical Center, Pontiac, Oakland
- POH Medical Center, Clarkston, Oakland
- POH Medical Center, Oxford, Oakland
- St. John Oakland Hospital, Madison Heights, Oakland
- St John Providence Hospital, Southfield, Oakland
- ST. John Providence Park, Novi, Oakland
- St. Joseph Mercy Oakland, Pontiac, Oakland
- Genesys Hospital, Grand Blanc, Oakland

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