The Amateur in You, Part 2

What have you been pondering?

Net Control is your friend

Some of us are the types who question every-thing, from science to the law, from religious doctrine to civic authority, and often with good reason. On one hand, it's good that we question things, so that we can become bet-ter educated. On the other hand, sometimes it's just best to follow instructions, if the situ-ation requires your attention.

Purpose of Net Control

The reason we have one person in charge of a net is so that we can have an orderly ex-change of communication, whether that's for training or for an actual incident. The point of this short article is to help us understand that *we should always do our best to follow the directions given by Net Control*.

Please understand that Net Control has no real authority, and should not make any deci-sions, except those that relate to the net it-self, such as the choice of frequency, mode of operation, type of net, and so forth. But, it's possible that Net Control is shadowing an overseeing authority, and is simply conduct-ing the net or passing along policy as it's giv-en. This is the primary reason for us to ac-cept and follow the instructions voiced by Net Control.

Serving two masters

In the world of CERT, we learn a principle known as *unity of command*, meaning that each participant in the entire chain answers only to one leader. However, we do find occa-sionally that we end up answering to two or more, due to our involvement or allegiance to different groups that could be directing the activity at the moment. For example, say Net Control asks you to communicate a message to a utility manager, but your religious leader tells you to hold off with that message. Should you ignore your religious leader and

make the communication, or obey your reli-gious leader and hold off passing the mes-sage? Eventually, *you're* going to have to make that decision; however, remember that Net Control might be shadowing an official whose directives take precedence.

The buck stops with Net Control

Back to questioning everything. Should you ever question the instructions given by Net Control? If you truly feel that you have im-portant information to offer, go ahead and make a suggestion, but once Net Control has heard your suggestion, *you should accept and follow the subsequent decision*. For ex-ample, say Net Control has asked all people to gather at the nearby elementary school. You might want to remind Net Control that it's summertime, and that the school is closed, but if Net Control returns and tells you that the city has given him or her the key, then the topic is closed, and you need to follow the original instructions. Then again, if Net Control determines that you have updat-ed information he or she wasn't aware of, then you should follow the new instructions that Net Control gives you.