

Hot Tips

Good info for the new ham, and old stuff to refresh your memory



Become part of RACES

Due to innovations made by amateurs through the past one hundred-plus years, government and military have been able to communicate during times when it's most crucial, such as natural disasters, search-and-rescue, and international conflict. Those sparks of creativity only prompted more experimentation by amateurs, and the airwaves in the early days of radio became flooded with the trials and errors of many projects.

At the onset of World War I, it became apparent that the military could not compete with the huge army of hobbyists for the radio frequency spectrum. In response, the US Congress ordered all amateur radio operation to cease. After the War, amateurs were permitted to return to the airwaves. Then came World War II, and once again, all amateur radio was ordered shut down nation-wide.

What is RACES

It was during World War II that the US Congress drafted the [War Powers Act of 1941](#), which provided for an amateur radio service to continue operating during war. Today, this service is known as RACES, the **Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service**, managed primarily on the state level. Regular amateurs can apply for RACES credentials, permitting them to continue operating, but in a RACES capacity, during wartime or other emergencies.

RACES accredits amateurs, conducts nets, trains its members, and more. Its purpose is to provide a body of proficient communication volunteers who can use their own equipment, skill, and time to aid with communication during a large-scale crisis. Once a person is accredited, RACES issues a unique number to the person, to be used along with the FCC-assigned call sign, for identification. Should the Act go into effect, only those with a RACES number may transmit on amateur frequencies.

RACES activation

State governors and Public Safety officials can **activate** a RACES operation if they deem the incident scope to be large enough to warrant the use of amateur communication, due to damaged or inadequate infrastructure. During an activation, Public Safety officials will send out a notification to RACES members.

Any amateur whose license has never been suspended can apply to RACES to become accredited. To become part of RACES in Utah, visit the [Utah Department of Public Safety website](#) to download the registration form.

RACES nets and training

Once you're assigned your RACES number, you can check into one of the monthly RACES Nets. In Utah, the RACES VHF / UHF nets are held at 8 pm of the third Thursday of even-numbered months on several statewide repeater systems. Another RACES Net is held on 80 meters during odd-numbered months. Many official government agencies open their EOCs (Emergency Operation Centers) to allow RACES members to check in from their physical locations.

The RACES leadership holds trainings during the monthly nets, on topics you likely know well, but can also include new or updated information. A worthwhile and more detailed and in-depth training is held annually on the first Saturday of November at the State of Utah RACES Conference.

Your opportunity

Your service in RACES is welcome and appreciated, yet voluntary. Still, *being one of a few who can operate a radio during wartime or other crisis is big, and your service can mean saving lives.*