



Garland Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service

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Garland RACES History

Garland RACES was formed in 1976 shortly after the City learned that Dallas RACES was providing early warnings of severe weather that sometimes produce tornados. RACES is an organization of amateur radio operators who volunteer their time and equipment to provide supplemental communications to the City during times of an emergency. In addition, RACES members are trained by the National Weather Service to spot severe storms that could produce tornados. Therefore, the City uses RACES volunteers to provide early warning to citizens of potentially damaging weather. RACES volunteers are also trained to provide communications during virtually all types of emergencies that could occur in the City.

Since 1976, Garland RACES has been activated many times to serve the City and places outside of the City. A few significant instances within the City were a train explosion in 1976, a train derailment with chemical spill in 1981, a major power outage in 1985 and several widespread telephone outages. In addition to numerous storm-spotting alerts that occur each year, probably the most significant RACES activity was assisting the City in the Y2K preparation. Here RACES units manned each critical location throughout the City ready to provide communications should the main lines of communications fail.

RACES activations outside of Garland include providing a 13-unit communications crew together with a portable repeater to Wichita Falls immediately following the tornado there in 1979. The same was true for Paris, Texas after their tornado in 1981. Each of these activations lasted several days. Communications in both Wichita Falls and Paris were mainly to support city government and the Red Cross. In 2003 a large number of Garland RACES units provided communications for the Space Shuttle Columbia Recovery Operation in San Augustine and Nacogdoches, Texas. Again, a portable repeater, furnished by Garland RACES, was set up early on near San Augustine to provide communications between governmental agencies and debris search teams in the field. The portable repeater operated until permanent equipment could be installed.

Garland RACES volunteers are probably the best trained units of this type in the state. Each volunteer is required to meet certain requirements each year. Garland RACES conducts on-the-air training weekly on the first, second, third and fifth Thursday evenings at 9:00 on 146.660 or 147.240 MHz and Dallas City RACES conducts training twice monthly on Sunday evenings at 8:00 on 146.880 MHz. The public is welcome to listen in on these training sessions.

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