



Garland Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service

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Amateur Radio - Public Information Procedures

GRACES/GARES Amateur Radio operation may attract media attention at some point during most emergency activations.

When Public Information Officers (PIOs) are available they will be responsible for management of all media contacts. In some circumstances reporters will appear at the Amateur station when the only people on duty are the on-air operators. Volunteers are not required to give an interview, and may just pass along some off-camera background information. If the decision is made to give an interview, here are some interviewing¹ tips.

What to say - The “Amateur Radio Story” is consistent and simple:

- We provide emergency communications as needed and can serve as a backup when regular communication resources go down or become overloaded. For instance, during the Columbia Disaster Amateur Radio provided communications between local and state agencies for nearly two weeks. In another situation in Garland when the Police and Fire Radio System went down, Amateur Radio again actively provided back up communications until the system was returned to normal service. And on a consistent basis, Amateur Radio operators provide the ground truths needed by the National Weather Service in providing hazardous weather information to the general public. We can do this because we operate our own, self-contained stations that don't rely on the power grid or the telephone network. We can communicate locally, across the state, or around the world.
- Amateur Radio support is an all-volunteer effort. No one gets paid, and we use our own equipment. We enjoy using our equipment and skills to provide public service.

What not to say

- Don't use jargon or technical terms. Just speak plain English. Say “We can use our equipment to talk to Dallas, Austin, Washington, South America, or around the world if we need to.” Don't say “We're talking to Austin on a NVIS network, and we can reach South America on the HF sideband net on 75 meters.” That's gibberish to the reporter and the audience.
- Don't give reporters the contents of any messages that have been passed or the specifics of any communication in progress. They can listen in and record any communication in progress while they are present. If they want specific information, direct them to the Amateur PIO, the EOC Director, City Public Information Office or event official.

During the media interview if you receive questions regarding non-amateur radio topics you should refer the media representative to the Joint Information Center or the incident or event PIO.

Personal Appearance

- When assigned to an Event or Incident EOC, Shelter, ICP, or similar, Amateur Radio operators should dress comfortably; however, we should always strive to make a good impression on the press, Event or Incident officials, and other workers. Clothing including clean t-shirts and jeans will be appropriate. Please refrain from wearing clothing that may be offensive to others.

Reference: ¹ Wake County ARES/RACES State Emergency Operations Plan