

Thank-you for volunteering as a CERN monitor! Your time is much appreciated even if you not hear an emergency call during your watch. However, because you are on watch those who work, play and travel through the remote areas of our State have an additional layer of safety. If an emergency occurs, the time you spend answering the call, carefully gathering and relaying critical information to 9-1-1 may make the difference between life and death. Please feel free to ask any questions during CERN's daily 6:30 pm net on the Colorado Connection linked frequencies.

Following are some policies and procedures that will help your time as a CERN volunteer monitor go smoothly.

## **1. MAKING YOUR VOLUNTEER ANNOUNCEMENT**

At the top of each hour of your watch, please announce that you are monitoring the Colorado Connection frequencies to answer and relay any emergency call for help to 9-1-1. This announcement does two things: (1) Informs all listeners that emergency help is available; (2) Advertises the CERN Net which meets at 6:30pm every evening to invite hams to volunteer as monitors. You may adapt the script to fit your personality, but try to occasionally include the phrase: "In an emergency, please call 'MAYDAY' three times in quick succession." It is much easier when monitoring to listen for "MAYDAY MAYDAY MAYDAY" then to have to pause what you are normally doing as soon as someone begins speaking over the air to decide if it is the beginning of a call for help. Being able to mentally tune out superfluous conversations makes your time monitoring much easier. However, also see items #10, #11.

## **2. ANSWERING AN AMATEUR RADIO OPERATOR'S CALL FOR HELP**

How do we answer a ham's call for help? Here is a scenario that will give a basic response along with hints on how to fill out one of CERN's Standardized Emergency Report forms:

**Ham Caller:** "I want to report an emergency! Is anyone listening on this frequency?"

**You:** "This is (your Call Sign) (your Name). I am monitoring this frequency for Colorado Emergency Reporting Net. How may I help you?"

**Ham Caller:** "I just saw a car hit an elk on Hwy 24. It looks like the driver is really badly injured. I'm trying to find a place so I can turn around and go back to help him."

**You:** "OK, I'll need some information so I can call 9-1-1 for you." (Turn to your CERN TRAFFIC/MEDICAL EMERGENCY report form and begin filling in the information). "What is your Name? ... Your Call Sign? ... What is your phone number? ... (you already know what assistance is needed: police/sheriff and ambulance) ... What direction are you traveling? (N, S, E, W) Do you know what mile post the accident is near on Highway 24? (If caller doesn't know, ask what town, landmark, etc is close by, then use CERN's Cities with Their Counties document to determine the County where the accident occurred. See Item #3 below.). "Is just one vehicle involved in the accident? ... Is anyone else injured beside the driver? ... Do you know if anyone is deceased? ... Is there anything else you want 9-1-1 to know?" (Write down the facts) ... Thank you, I'm dialing 9-1-1 right now, please stay on this frequency in case 9-1-1 needs to speak with you. If we should temporarily lose radio communication, I will call you back, so keep your radio on and tuned to this frequency." Be sure to

keep in radio contact with the caller as needed until help arrives. If the caller is content to wait without your assistance, inform him you will return to monitoring for other calls for help.

## 2A. PROLONGED EVENTS AND THE END OF YOUR WATCH

If the situation turns out to be a long search and rescue operation or if the caller needs to make contact at a later time (example: to conserve power on a hand held transceiver), and you need to go off air at the end of your watch, feel free to explain to the caller you will be passing him on to another volunteer monitor. Then broadcast a call for another CERN volunteer monitor to relieve you and inform him/her regarding the caller's situation. Be sure as you pass the call off that both the new CERN monitor and caller are in good radio contact. If there is no CERN monitor on the air at the time of the incident, refer to the **CERN EMERGENCY SUPPORT PHONE LIST**. This is a list of volunteers who have volunteered to takeover an ongoing emergency in the event that no other monitor is available. Once someone is contacted on that list bring them up to date on the event over the phone and then ensure that they are able to contact the party involved or at least have a good signal to and from the repeater that they are using.

By filling in the Standardized Emergency Report form you will know what questions to ask. After speaking with 9-1-1 assure the ham caller that you have relayed the information to 9-1-1 and that emergency responders have been activated. Then thank the caller for making the report.

## 3. CALLING 9-1-1 IN ANOTHER COUNTY

Because Colorado Connection Repeaters cover the entire State of Colorado, it is likely that you could receive a call for help from an amateur radio operator in a county or city that is hundreds of miles from your location. So it is important to understand that 9-1-1 communications centers in Colorado are County-based. For example, you might live in the city of Longmont in Weld County and receive a call for help from someone saying he is near the city of Cortez. Refer to CERN's "Cities with Their Counties" document, look up "Cortez" and notice that Cortez is in Montezuma County. In this example, when you dial 91-1 to report the emergency, you will reach the 9-1-1 operator located in your County (Weld County). Immediately explain to your 9-1-1 operator that the call for help originates from Cortez, Montezuma County and ask to be transferred to the Montezuma County 9-1-1 operator. Your operator will then do one of two things: (1) directly transfer your call to the 9-1-1 operator in Montezuma County; or if the call cannot be transferred, (2) give you the direct telephone number for the 9-1-1 operator in Montezuma County – which you will then have to dial yourself. Once you are in contact with the 9-1-1 operator in Montezuma County, proceed to report the caller's emergency information following the Standardized Reporting Procedure.

An example of the conversation to transfer to a 9-1-1 operator in another County might go like this:

**Your Weld County 9-1-1 Operator:** "This is 9-1-1. What is your emergency?"

**CERN Volunteer:** "My name is John Doe, and my call sign is W0XYZ. I have received a radio call for emergency help from an amateur radio operator near the city of Cortez in Montezuma County. Could you please transfer me to the 9-1-1 operator in Montezuma County?"

**Your Weld County 9-1-1 Operator:** “You’re saying the emergency is in Montezuma County?”

**CERN Volunteer:** “Correct. Can you transfer me to the 9-1-1 operator in Montezuma County, please?”

**Your Weld County 9-1-1 Operator:** “Just a minute while I look that up.”

At this point, if your 9-1-1 operator is able to transfer your call, the two 9-1-1 operators may have a brief conversation, and then you will be told to go ahead and give the necessary information. If your 9-1-1 operator is unable to transfer the call, you will be given the direct phone number for the Montezuma County 9-1-1 operator. Write it down and repeat it back to the operator for verification.

**CERN Volunteer:** “Thank you. Is there anything else you need from me?”

**Your Weld County 9-1-1 Operator:** “No, go ahead and hang up.” At this point you hang up and dial the Montezuma County 9-1-1 operator.

**Montezuma County 9-1-1 Operator:** “This is 9-1-1. What is your emergency?”

**CERN Volunteer:** “My name is John Doe, and my call sign is W0XYZ. I have received a radio call for emergency help from an amateur radio operator near the city of Cortez. I am still in contact by radio with the caller and relaying the information to you.” Then proceed to report the information using the Standardized Report Form.

**CERN Volunteer:** After 9-1-1 has all the information, ask: “Is there anything else you need from me?”

**Montezuma County 9-1-1 Operator:** “No, I’ve got it, so you can go ahead and hang up.”

**CERN Volunteer:** After hanging up, contact the caller again and inform them that 9-1-1 now has the information and has activated emergency responders. Ask the caller if he wants you to stay in radio contact with him until the responders arrive. If not, wish him well and go back to monitoring as usual.

## **When to use CERN’S Direct Line to 9-1-1 Call Centers’ document**

CERN’s Direct Line to 911 Call Centers document should only be used in the following situations:

1. Your local 911 system is out of service and your call is not answered,
2. Your local 911 operator cannot transfer you to the correct County 911 system,
3. Or, in the process of transferring your call is dropped and you cannot reconnect with your local 911 operator. Always dial your local 911 operator first and follow the procedure outlined above in this

document under Section 3 “Calling 911 In Another County” before using the “Direct Line to 911 Call Centers document.

#### **4. BE CAREFUL NOT TO TIME OUT THE REPEATER**

The Colorado Connection Repeater State-wide system has a 2 minute time-out. This means you should not speak for more than 1 minute and 55 seconds before unkeying the mike and letting the repeater system reset. Also, wait 2 to 3 seconds after keying the mike before speaking so the repeaters can all come back on line. Be sure to tell a caller that if communication with him/her is temporarily lost you will call back, so keep his/her radio on.

#### **5. THE IMPORTANCE OF ALWAYS COMMUNICATING EMERGENCIES TO 9-1-1**

As long as the 9-1-1 emergency service is available, always communicate with 9-1-1 in a true emergency affecting life, property, danger to others, et cetera. All emergency responders are initially contacted for dispatch by 9-1-1. If, for instance, a ham caller asks for help rescuing a lost person and you telephone Search and Rescue directly, they will not act upon your request. For a Search and Rescue mobilization to occur, you must call 9-1-1. Nine-One-One then notifies the Sheriff. The Sheriff then determines whether Sheriff’s Deputies can handle the situation. If not, or if the Deputies need additional help, then the Sheriff notifies Search and Rescue to mobilize. In a true emergency, always relay the ham caller’s request for help to 9-1-1. Only if 9-1-1 is non-existent should you telephone emergency responders directly and relay the caller’s message to them.

#### **6. ILLEGAL COMMUNICATIONS**

(Please visit [www.colcon.org](http://www.colcon.org) for their usage policies). Rarely will you hear someone use obscenity, willfully disrupt, or broadcast music on Colorado Connection Repeater frequencies. If you do, ignore the offender and continue on as if the interruption had not occurred. People who use obscenity, willfully disrupt, or broadcast music are often looking for recognition – do not acknowledge them and they will either stop broadcasting (which resolves the issue), or become frustrated and continue over a longer period of time (which makes it easier for FCC monitors to locate and deal with the offender(s)). If the problem is severe, write down their Call Sign (if given), broadcast frequency, time of day, gender, language used, number of violations, et cetera. Include your name, Call Sign and telephone number and report the incident(s) to the FCC at 1-888-225-5322.

#### **7. “AMBER ALERTS”, WEATHER WARNINGS, FIRE ANNOUNCEMENTS, etc**

Any alerts, warnings, or communications originating from civil or military authorities and broadcast by the media should not be reported to 9-1-1 because the appropriate authorities are already aware of the situation. If a ham calls on your monitored frequency and wants to discuss an alert, warning or communication that has been broadcast by the media, it is up to your discretion as to whether or not you join in the conversation. However, no media broadcast alert, warning or announcement should be relayed to 9-1-1.

But you should immediately fill in the Standardized Emergency Report form and relay to 9-1-1 any call you receive about any emergency affecting life, property, danger to others, et cetera which has not previously been

communicated to the appropriate authorities. The crucial question for you to ask is: Do the authorities (9-1-1, police, fire, ambulance, Search and Rescue, etc) already know about this emergency? If the answer is “Yes,” then do not tie up 9-1-1 resources by reporting what they already know. If the answer is “No,” then proceed to accurately relay the information from the amateur radio caller to 9-1-1 by telephone.

Sometimes, in a genuine emergency, someone else may have reported the emergency. If you do not know for certain that the emergency has already been reported, call 9-1-1 anyway and follow the standardized reporting procedure. It is better to be safe than sorry. The 9-1-1 operator will inform you if they have already received a report of the emergency. If so, thank 9-1-1, hang up and relay that information back to the amateur radio caller.

## **8. FAKE “EMERGENCY” CALLS**

Generally you can expect emergency calls to be genuine if the ham caller gives his/her Name, Call Sign, and Phone Number (even though there is no cell coverage). To help prevent fake calls, please always ask for and record Name, Call Sign and Phone Number on the Standardized Emergency Report form. If you suspect a caller may be faking an “emergency” call, look up the Call Sign on QRZ.com and verify if: (1) the Call Sign exists, and (2) if the caller’s name corresponds to the name of the ham listed for that call sign. If there is only a discrepancy with the name there is a possibility – not a certainty – that the call is fake. Nevertheless, fill out the standardized report form as completely as possible and report as normally to 9-1-1. If the Call Sign does not exist on QRZ.com, have the amateur radio caller repeat it to you and check again. If the Call Sign still does not exist, simply inform the amateur radio caller you are reporting the “emergency” to 9-1-1. Stop transmitting to the caller, use your telephone to report the “emergency” situation to 9-1-1 and explain to the 9-1-1 operator that you believe the call might be fake because the amateur radio caller used a “nonexistent” Call Sign or Name. Let the 9-1-1 operator determine what steps to take next. If the caller contacts you again by radio, assure him/her that you have relayed the information to 9-1-1 and that they are responding appropriately. Do not accuse anyone of making a fake emergency call! The authorities will make that determination and follow up as they see fit. Colorado Emergency Reporting Net’s monitors are not the “Truth Police”. Keep in mind that a fake “MAYDAY” call is a federal offense. Do not use the three words “Mayday Mayday Mayday” in any on-air conversation unless you are actually calling for emergency help. If you are instructing someone on-air how to call for emergency help, say: “If you ever need emergency help, key your mike and call ‘Mayday’ three times in quick succession.” But do not demonstrate the call.

## **9. DETERMINING HOW TO RESPOND TO A CALL FOR HELP**

Not every call you hear on the frequency you monitor is a true emergency. It is important for volunteer monitors to make informed decisions so that crucial resources are not wasted on responses that could be handled by others. To illustrate, here are four examples of amateur radio operator calls you might receive and some suggested responses:

A. Ham caller’s car is parked in his driveway and will not start. You have determined there is no danger to life or property and no hazard to himself or others, so there is no need to call 9-1-1. At your discretion you might engage the ham caller in conversation. You might volunteer to telephone his friend

and relay a message for the caller. It is always good to help a fellow ham if it does not distract you from answering emergency calls.

B. Ham caller's car is broken down on a highway at night, it is snowing, the car has no lights. Call the appropriate County's 9-1-1 operator (see Item #3 above) and report using the "Traffic/Medical Emergency" standardized form because this situation poses a danger to the caller and other drivers. Police presence is needed to call a tow truck, direct traffic and aid tow truck in removing the vehicle.

C. Ham caller's car is stuck on a forest service road in reasonable weather. You have determined there is no hazard to life or property and no danger to himself or others. No need to call 9-1-1. But the amateur radio operator caller wants you to relay information to a towing company to have the car towed. At your discretion, relay caller's request to the towing company. But do not relay credit card numbers over the air! Some tow companies require a credit card number before they travel to the caller's location. Others will wait until they arrive before they require a credit card. Each towing company has its own individual policy. Simply relay the message(s).

D. Ham caller's vehicle is broken down on very remote off-road Mosquito Pass in below zero weather and cannot run the engine to keep warm. Or this could be a situation where a hiker, climber, skier, etc, is lost, or injured in a remote area and unable to self-rescue. Fill in the "Lost Emergency Requiring Search And Rescue" standardized form (including the caller's GPS coordinates if he/she knows them) and relay this emergency to the appropriate County's 9-1-1 operator (see Item #3 above). But in a case involving a vehicle, after the 9-1-1 operator releases you, take a moment to inform the amateur radio caller that Search And Rescue rescues people, not vehicles. Explain that the caller can make arrangements with friends or a commercial towing service for the vehicle to be recovered at a latter time.

Obviously these scenarios do not just apply to calls involving vehicles, but can be adapted to almost any type of call for help you may hear. The key definition of an emergency, and therefore the need to call 9-1-1, is: ***Does this situation constitute a possible threat to life, a serious loss of property, or a present danger to the caller or others?*** If the answer is "Yes," then call 9-1-1. **But keep in mind that inconveniences are not emergencies.**

#### **10. CALLER REQUESTS EMERGENCY ADVICE**

In an EMERGENCY situation we only gather information and provide communication between callers and 9-1-1. Do not provide medical, legal or technical advice to anyone unless you are a licensed professional in the appropriate occupation. If someone asks for EMERGENCY advice, inform him/her that you are relaying the question to the 9-1-1 operator for assistance. Relay any emergency advice the 9-1-1 operator offers, back to the amateur radio caller. If the caller asks you to relay a message to a friend or family member, do so at your own discretion.

#### **11. CALLER REQUESTS NON-EMERGENCY ADVICE**

In NON-EMERGENCY situations, where a ham calls on the frequency you are monitoring and asks advice of a general nature, you are free to decide whether or not to respond. As a courtesy you might offer to relay the

information to a friend or neighbor that the amateur radio caller thinks might be able to help. However, keep in mind that your primary purpose is to monitor the frequency for emergency communications.

**12. KEEP CALM, BE POLITE AND BE THOROUGHLY ACCURATE**

Remember that in a genuine emergency approximately 80% of people either freeze or panic. So it is essential when speaking with callers, filling out the Standardized Emergency Report forms and relaying information to 9-1-1 to keep calm, be polite and be thoroughly accurate. The 9-1-1 operator will be recording your telephone call so that no information is lost. If you do not understand something that is said by either the amateur radio caller or 9-1-1 operator, ask him/her to clarify. In responding to an emergency call in a remote wilderness area in Colorado, it is possible for Search and Rescue to take six hours or more just to hike to the caller's location. In large rural counties with small populations, Sheriff's deputies, fire, ambulance and other responders may take up to 45 minutes to arrive. So taking an extra minute or two with the ham radio caller to make sure you have accurately filled in the Standardized Emergency Report form and relayed all necessary information to 9-1-1 will not significantly change the amount of time it takes for help to arrive. But getting a critical piece of information wrong, can significantly delay or prevent help from arriving at all. Keep in mind that Search and Rescue personnel – like most other emergency responders – are focused on saving people's lives, they do not tow out disabled vehicles.

**13. PRIORITY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS DURING AMATEUR NETS**

Emergencies can occur at any time. If an emergency call comes through while an amateur radio Net is in progress, the emergency call has priority. Use the phrase "BREAK for Net Control" and inform the Net Control that you are answering an emergency call on this frequency and will relay the information to the 9-1-1 operator. Net Control should immediately suspend the Net so you, as a trained monitor for Colorado Emergency Reporting Net, can engage the caller and follow the standardized emergency reporting procedure.

**14. A REPEATER IS MALFUNCTIONING OR YOU CANNOT MONITOR OR CHECK IN TO THE NET**

If a repeater is malfunctioning or you are unable to hear/check in to the daily Net to volunteer, verify or change your "watch", please email us at [cern@colcon.org](mailto:cern@colcon.org) and type "CERN" in the subject line. Email is CERN's alternate to radio communications. If you are mobile during your watch and know that you will be passing briefly through terrain that will disrupt your ability to hear a call for help, broadcast the following when you make your monitoring announcement: "FYI to CERN volunteer monitors: I will be in intermittent communications for a few minutes. If I do not respond to a call, please do so for me."

**15. CONTINUING YOUR WATCH, MONITORING ANNOUNCEMENT, NEED SUBSTITUTE**

As a CERN monitor, you have volunteered a specific hour of your day or night to listen for emergency calls on one of Colorado Connection Repeater frequencies. You may keep your preferred day and time indefinitely as your personal "watch." If you need to make a change in the day(s) or time(s) of your watch, please let us know. Or, if you are unable to monitor during your assigned watch, please ask for a substitute at [cern@colcon.org](mailto:cern@colcon.org) and

type “CERN Substitute” in the subject line. List day and time for which you need a substitute. At the top of the hour when you begin your “watch” by announcing that you are monitoring (see CERN’s Volunteer Monitor Announcement document), there may be a conversation in progress between hams, or a Net meeting. Wait until the conversation or Net is off the air before making your “monitoring” announcement. Then go about your normal activities while monitoring your radio in the background for an emergency call.

**16. KEEP FORMS AND DOCUMENTS READILY AVAILABLE DURING YOUR WATCH**

It is important to place this document (CERN Policies and Procedures Training), CERN’s Cities with Their Counties document and CERN’s Standardized Emergency Report forms in a binder labeled “Colorado Emergency Reporting Network” and keep it next to your radio during your “watch”. Two pens or pencils (Murphy’s Law) for filling in the forms, and your telephone/cell phone should also be by your radio so you can speak to the appropriate County’s 9-1-1 operator by telephone and simultaneously relay information by radio with the caller. See Item #3 above.

**17. WHY DOES COLORADO EMERGENCY REPORTING NET NEED MY EMAIL ADDRESS?**

Initially we email all necessary CERN documents to new volunteers. In addition, we occasionally update the training documents and reporting forms and then email the updates to every CERN volunteer. We will also email you if a repeater malfunctions and suggest an alternate frequency. Your email address is only used by us for CERN matters, and is not distributed to other entities.

**18. WHY DOES COLORADO EMERGENCY REPORTING NET NEED MY PHONE NUMBER?**

While a phone number is ***Not*** mandatory, it is encouraged to provide one. The use of your number is only for release to First Responders (Fire, Police, Forest Service, and Search and Rescue) when needed as a part of their investigation. The other use of your phone number is if you have volunteered to be on the EMERGENCY SUPPORT CALL LIST (DESCRIBED IN 2A.) If you have volunteered to be on this list your phone number will be provided to all of the CERN random and scheduled monitors to aide in finding a replacement during an ongoing emergency.

Thanks so much for your time and willingness to help others! Not only do CERN’s volunteers help make others safer – we also make ourselves safer as we enjoy Colorado’s wild areas!

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