



**Letter of Understanding
Between the
Provincial Emergency Radio Communications Service
Represented by the
British Columbia Provincial Emergency Program and
Radio Amateurs of Canada - Amateur Radio Emergency Service**

The Provincial Emergency Radio Communications Service (PERCS) provides emergency radio communication capability through the services of volunteers. PERCS operates in support of the British Columbia Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) and local authorities in B.C.

The PERCS concept was developed to create a unique sense of identity and source of information for amateur radio volunteers. A Provincial Emergency Radio Advisory Committee (PERAC) has been established, composed of amateur radio operators, that advises on issues relating to emergency radio communications.

The national organization that represents volunteer amateur radio operators is Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC). Throughout Canada, RAC facilitates emergency radio communications provided by volunteers through the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) structure.

The purpose of this document is to bridge the differences and promote the similarities between PERCS and ARES.

The intent of PERCS and ARES organizations is to support and develop an emergency radio communications capability within the British Columbia amateur radio community. This is achieved through a number of coordinating functions and is not limited to the following:

- maintenance of resource and qualification lists;
- development of training materials and conduct of training activities;
- development, conduct and evaluation of emergency communications exercises.

Beyond amateur radio the PERCS structure extends to include other forms of radio communication such as licensed commercial, Citizen's Band (CB), and Family Radio Service (FRS) undertaken by volunteers in the event of an emergency or disaster. It is recognized however, that the level of technical knowledge and skill inherent in licensed amateur radio operators will ensure their leadership role within PERCS and ARES.

Background:

Amateur radio operators throughout Canada and elsewhere have historically volunteered their time, equipment and expertise in support of disaster and emergency response activities.

Some recent situations in which volunteer amateur radio operators have assisted with emergency communications are:

- Heather Thomas search, Surrey, October, 2000;
- Salmon Arm Forest Fire, August, 1998;
- Swiss Air Crash, 1999;
- Ice Storm in Eastern Canada & USA, December/January 1998;
- Symphony of Fire, Summers 1998, 1999, 2000;
- evacuation of residents displaced from fire.

Adherence to established organizational and operational standards for the conduct of emergency radio communications is fostered by Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC) in Canada through the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES). During a disaster, the standardization of procedures for the handling of formal message traffic facilitates the accurate passage of information between government and non-governmental agencies. Amateur radio has been recognized by many agencies such as Emergency Social Services (ESS), Red Cross and Salvation Army for its ability to provide an alternate communications capability.

In times of a large scale disaster, amateur radio operators are able to communicate with other amateur radio operators worldwide to advise the status of the affected area(s), and the type of assistance required.

PERCS AND ARES:

This Letter of Understanding (LOU) is being created to clarify the terminology, roles and responsibilities between PERCS and ARES.

Parties Involved Agree:

1. Members of PERCS and ARES will be covered by the same principles that are in place in all Provinces and Territories of Canada with regards to RAC/ARES;
2. Depending on which National, Provincial or Territorial organization has been designated as “net control” the terminology used by each group may vary. For example: Municipal Amateur Coordinator (MAC) in B.C. vs. Emergency Coordinator (EC) elsewhere;
3. Where different terms are used, a vocabulary list will be developed by PERAC to assist volunteers by providing a definition of corresponding terms and their applicability within the PERCS and/or ARES organizations;
4. PERCS and/or ARES may promote membership in RAC;
5. RAC will promote and support PERCS and ARES;
6. Though RAC is headquartered in Ottawa, RAC will encourage B.C. volunteers to support and assist PERCS and all other volunteer activities. PERAC, organized by PEP will endeavour to maintain and improve a province wide emergency radio communication capability;
7. PERCS and ARES organizations will maintain links to the RAC web site and be provided access to all articles and training materials available on the RAC web site;
8. RAC will maintain links to the PERCS web site and be provided access to all articles, training materials and organizational materials available on the PERCS web site;
9. RAC agrees to consider material for publication in TCA submitted by PERCS;
10. PERCS agrees to consider material for publication submitted by RAC;
11. Training manuals and message forms will be standardized according to ARES material and will be freely shared between RAC, PERCS and ARES;
12. Emergency radio communications training in B.C. will be managed by PERCS and ARES. PERCS and ARES will endeavour to ensure compliance with PEP policies relating to the conduct, funding and support of volunteer training;
13. Training will be organized by PERAC and submitted for approval to PEP and RAC. Course designation and scheduling will be at the request of individual municipal amateur radio groups or clubs;

14. Trainers will present a list of participants and a brief outline of the training course;
15. The request for training must include a stated objective for the requested training;
16. Training costs, if any, will be presented to PERAC in advance of any training session. Funding for all training will be at the discretion of PEP;
17. Should a club or group conduct training without PEP funding, a report stating the course objectives should be sent to PERCS and ARES through PERAC;
18. RAC will allow course materials to be made available to all PEP supported volunteer groups and training centers or providers including the Justice Institute of British Columbia;
19. Through the British Columbia Emergency Response Management System (BCERMS) a standardized model for emergency management and response is being developed and has been adopted by all B.C. government agencies;
20. Where standardized BCERMS forms are modified to facilitate radio message handling the format and sequence of message headers will comply with accepted ARES standards;
21. Message handling practices, procedures and standards developed through the adoption and implementation of BCERMS will conform to ARES standards for the transmission of radio message traffic;
22. All BCERMS documentation developed to facilitate the transmission of emergency management information using commercial or amateur radio will be shared with RAC for use by other jurisdictions.

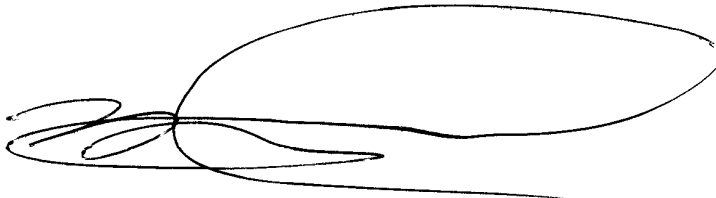
SUMMARY:

Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC) and the Provincial Emergency Radio Communications Service (PERCS) agree to work jointly to provide amateur radio communications services to the B.C. government emergency response structure and in the service of the public.

The Provincial Emergency Radio Advisory Committee (PERAC) agrees to use the ARES structure for training and message handling in accordance with PERCS requirements.

RAC agrees to fully acknowledge PERCS and ARES as the organizational bodies within British Columbia providing emergency radio communication services.

Signed by:



Mervin Harrower
Director, Provincial Emergency Program
Province of British Columbia

02-01-02

Date



Pierre Mainville, VA3PM
Vice President Field Services, Radio Amateurs of Canada

December 21, 2001

Date



Ken Oelke, VE6AFO
President, Radio Amateurs of Canada

DECEMBER 18, 2001

Date