

Community and Disaster Services

Message from Community Services Officer



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The RAC Field Organization was established 30 years ago to assist communities by supporting local clubs or organizations.

Radio Amateurs of Canada has always been interested in local activities across the country.

Through the reports in the Community and Disaster Services, feature articles and the Coming Events column in TCA magazine and on the website, we are pleased to assist community groups, clubs and disaster service groups in sharing information about what is taking place in their region.

Sectional Leadership Changes

Radio Amateurs of Canada is pleased to announce significant leadership updates that will support and strengthen Amateur Radio communities across Canada. These appointments bring extensive operating experience, volunteer leadership and a clear commitment to helping local clubs and Radio Amateurs remain connected to their Sections and to RAC.

Malcolm Farrell, VY1FC – Yukon Section Manager

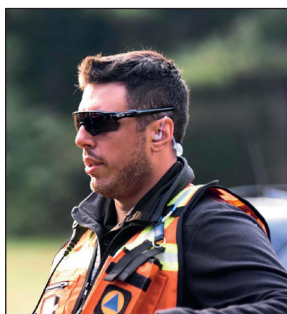
Malcolm Farrell, VY1FC, has stepped into the role of Section Manager for the Yukon Section. His Amateur Radio journey

spans more than three decades. He was first licensed in 1993 in Keswick Ridge, New Brunswick, as VE1MJF. Over the years he has held several call signs, including VE9MJF, VO1RC while living in St. Davids, Newfoundland, and VE9FC, before making the Yukon his home in 2009.

Malcolm currently enjoys a straightforward station – 100 watts or less and a wire antenna – and concentrates on SSB, digital modes and Parks on the Air activities. His service to the hobby also includes active involvement with the Yukon Amateur Radio Association. He previously served as YARA Vice-President and currently serves as Membership Director. That combination of practical operating experience and association leadership will be valuable as he works with Yukon clubs and operators.

Jean-Michel Vien, VA2XJM – Quebec Section Manager

RAC is equally pleased to welcome Jean-Michel Vien, VA2XJM, as the new Section Manager for Quebec. He brings substantial emergency-communications knowledge to the position.



Jean-Michel also serves as the Provincial Director of Emergency Telecommunications and as Coordinator for Emergency Telecommunications in Abitibi-Témiscamingue (08) and Nord-du-Québec (10) with the Fédération des clubs radioamateurs du Québec (RAQI).

We look forward to collaborating with both new Section Managers and to sharing news of the progress, partnerships and activities developing in their respective areas.

A New CFARS Liaison Role

As part of RAC's continuing commitment to the growth and relevance of Amateur Radio, a new Section-level position is being introduced: the Canadian Forces Affiliate Radio System (CFARS) Liaison. André Ravary, Sgt, CD (Retired), CIW508/VE4BK, has been appointed to the role.

The liaison position, previously held by past RAC President Phil McBride, VA3QR, is intended to support meaningful and sustained collaboration between Radio Amateurs of Canada and the CFARS command team.

It will help connect interested Radio Amateurs with appropriate information about CFARS activities, opportunities and events. Additional program updates will be shared in the coming weeks.

Ontario East Welcomes New ACS Leadership

Paul Burggraaf, VE3PRB – Capital District ACS Coordinator

Paul Burggraaf, VE3PRB, has recently been appointed Auxiliary Communications Service Coordinator for the Capital District by Lance Peterson, VA3LP, ACS Coordinator for the RAC Ontario East Section.

Paul has been an Amateur Radio operator since 2003 and earned his Advanced qualification in January 2025. Before 2023, he contributed 12 years of volunteer service in several Executive roles with Radio Amateurs of Canada.

He retired in April 2016 from his position as a Network Administrator with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.



During his years in that province, he also held several Executive positions with the Society of Newfoundland Radio Amateurs before moving to Ottawa in the fall of 2016.

“I have performed lead roles in a number of ARES-related and community service events over the years and have completed Incident Management System 100, Emergency Management 125 and ACS Auxiliary Communications training. I look forward to meeting with the various District clubs and Amateur Radio operators as we expand the ACS program.”

Simulated Emergency Exercise 2026

Setup: Friday, September 25
Exercise Play: Saturday and Sunday, September 26-27

Locations: Grenfel Community Hall, Sandy Cove Acres and a Simcoe County operations building.

Ontario Planned Exercise

The RAC Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS) Simulated Emergency Exercise 2026 will give participants two operational days to practise how auxiliary communicators can support emergency-management coordination when commercial power, cellular service, internet access and normal information pathways are degraded. The exercise is designed to be challenging enough to reveal gaps while remaining safe, respectful and achievable for volunteers with different levels of experience.

The weekend is not a competition and is not a demonstration of individual equipment. It is a supervised learning opportunity centred on teamwork, request-driven service, disciplined communications, Ontario IMS/ICS principles, PACE (Primary, Alternate, Contingency and Emergency) planning, accurate documentation and continuous improvement. New participants should expect guidance and mentoring; experienced participants will be asked to model calm, inclusive and professional behaviour.

Purpose and Operational Focus

The exercise will test whether RAC-ACS personnel, procedures and approved equipment can integrate with municipal emergency-management arrangements and maintain reliable, documented information flow between coordination and field locations during a prolonged infrastructure disruption. It will also provide structured evaluation opportunities for auxiliary communicators and for the teams that lead, control, support and assess their work.

The Scenario

On the morning of Saturday, September 26, a cascading provincial grid disturbance begins interrupting power across central Ontario. Exercise controllers introduce cyber complications that reduce confidence in system status and contribute to uneven restoration. Cellular networks and internet services become congested and unreliable as backup power is consumed. Municipal and community locations begin reporting access, welfare, shelter, fuel, traffic and public-information needs.

RAC-ACS receives a simulated request for communications support. Personnel are notified, checked in, assigned and

deployed only as authorized. A coordination station operates at the Simcoe County Emergency Operations Centre or an approved alternative. The Grenfel Community Hall provides a simulated reception-centre communications and staging function. Sandy Cove Acres serves as a controlled field node for simulated wellness, access and resource traffic. No unannounced resident contact or real personal information is required.

The simulated emergency represents a 72-hour consequence window compressed into two operational days. Day 1 moves from activation and reception-centre opening through field deployment, communications failures, growing community needs and misinformation. A controlled overnight period tests continuity with reduced staffing. Day 2 brings accumulated requests, further PACE changes, priority-traffic stress, recovery decisions, partial restoration, demobilization, and a joint hot wash involving all participating teams to review lessons learned and areas for improvement.

Simulated Emergency Test Overview		
Period	Exercise Emphasis	Participant Practice
Friday September 25	Site setup and readiness	Equipment checks, site orientation, safety and controller preparation
Saturday September 26	Activation and escalating disruption	Notification, check-in, assignments, field traffic, PACE changes and documentation
Controlled Overnight	Continuity with reduced staffing	Shift handover, welfare, logging, fatigue awareness and sustained information flow
Sunday September 27	Recovery and demobilization	Priority traffic, partial restoration, check-out, records and joint hot wash

Ontario Operators Can Take Part

Additional exercise details appeared on page 47 of the July/August 2026 issue of *The Canadian Amateur* and is available online at <https://www.rac.ca/community-services-officer/>. Ontario Amateur Radio operators who would like to participate may contact Jack Benes at acs.interoperability@rac.ca. Province-wide participants can support the weather portion of the exercise from their local area, subject to exercise instructions and authorization.

Auxiliary Communications Service Training Expands

RAC is expanding auxiliary communications training this year to include the Yukon, Nova Scotia and Alberta. The program will use a hybrid delivery model that begins by preparing instructors in each participating area. This approach is intended to build local teaching capacity, respect regional needs and make future training more sustainable.

Ontario training will continue from September 2026 through January 2027. As in the previous year, it is funded by the Province of Ontario through a transfer payment agreement. Courses are planned as two-day weekend programs and will be open to radio operators who want to learn how auxiliary communications can help their community or support RAC’s provincial Auxiliary Communications Service.

What Participants Will Learn

The training is practical and community-focused. It is not limited to radio operation. Participants learn how to work safely and professionally within an authorized emergency-management structure, how to understand the request from the authority having jurisdiction, and how to provide communications support without replacing the responsibilities of public-safety agencies or municipal staff.

ACS Training	
Training Area	Practical Learning Focus
ICS and Ontario IMS foundations	Chain of command, span of control, EOC coordination, operational briefings, assignments and accountability.
ACS roles and professional conduct	The auxiliary communicator's role, request-driven support, teamwork, inclusive conduct, confidentiality and limits of authority.
Interoperability and PACE	Primary, Alternate, Contingency and Emergency methods; identifying communications dependencies; changing methods in a controlled way.
Radio and message discipline	Net procedures, plain language, radio checks, priority and routine traffic, accurate relays, read-backs and concise status reports.
Plans, forms and documentation	Using the communications plan and practising check-in, formal messages and activity logs, including ICS/IMS 205, 211, 213 and 214 concepts.
Activation and deployment	Notification, availability, mobilization, staging, assignment, site orientation, shift handover, demobilization and check-out.
EOC and field operations	Supporting coordination and field locations, managing information flow, maintaining logs, and working with communications unit functions.
Safety and readiness	Personal and family preparedness, the 72-hour Go-Kit concept, site hazards, fatigue, weather, travel, buddy practices and Real-World safety stops.
Scenario-based practice	Applying procedures during simulated infrastructure failures, reception-centre support, welfare and resource traffic, and changing communications conditions.

Prerequisites and Course Expectations

Participants will require introductory training in the Incident Command System or Incident Management System and an introduction to emergency management before attending. Course notices will identify the accepted prerequisite or equivalent for each location. Participants should also arrive ready to work in teams, practise formal documentation and take part in short operational scenarios.

The program is designed to welcome operators who are new to auxiliary communications while giving experienced volunteers a consistent framework for mentoring and leadership.

Completing the weekend is an important step in readiness, but operational participation also depends on the applicable RAC-ACS onboarding, local authorization, role-specific preparation, safety requirements and any additional direction from the supported jurisdiction.



– 73, Jason Tremblay, VE3JXT

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Guthrie's Communications Inc., formerly Guthrie's Mechanical Services, is a family-run business serving the Greater Toronto Area and Southern Ontario for over 50 years.

Company founder Don Guthrie, VE3EVZ, has over 50 years of experience in tower work which has been passed down throughout the family generations. It was Don's love of Amateur Radio that first brought him into the field of antenna and tower installations.

Now generations later we are still growing in the tower business. We work with Amateur Radio operators and their projects along with many commercial projects. We specialize in installing all types of towers including Trylon, Maxtower, Delhi, Rohn, AN Wireless, Turris Corp and other manufacturers from non-penetrating roof mounts to monopoles, cellphone communication hardware installs on building rooftops, guyed towers and self-supporting towers.

We're always happy to give advice and a more detailed description of our services and costs. Please call Don, VE3EVZ, or Todd, VA3TGT, at 905-251-7133 or email todd@guthries.com at any time.

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