

## RACES Notes for 12/10/2008

### News and Announcements

#### 1) Upcoming Events:

12/13 – CARA Christmas Dinner  
12/13 – SAR Christmas Dinner  
1/10 – Glendale Westfest  
2/20-21 – Yuma Hamfest

2) Winter Changeover – Have you checked out your "Go-Bag" recently? At the last Search & Rescue meeting Ursula reminded everyone to check out their kits to be sure you are prepared for winter weather. This is always a good time to check batteries in your various devices (flashlights, GPS, portable radios). Do you have winter weight weather gloves, earmuffs or knit cap to protect your ears, long johns, extra dry socks, sweatshirt or similar items? If you carry extra meds with you, when was the last time you changed them out to be sure they are current?

3) RACES Net for 12/24 – Since our next scheduled net would normally fall on Christmas Eve, I am sure many of you will be tied up with church services, family events, etc. so I have decided to cancel that net. Therefore, our net next will not be until January 14. I will let you know that New Years Eve has frequently been a night we have been called out on, so don't be surprised if your beeper goes off. When was the last time you checked your pager batteries??

Training – On our last net we covered a couple training points based on recent missions and some shortcomings that were noted. I would like to continue that theme and discuss our role in the MCU. On some missions we provide a mini dispatch function such as Search and Rescue where we keep the Incident Command Staff apprised of what is going on and also relay direction or instruction to deployed teams. We routinely provide printed maps for teams as they prepare to deploy. We frequently keep track of team locations using various maps. We actually have five different map programs in the MCU. Do you know what they are and the advantages of each? They are:

Terrain Navigator – This is a specialized topographic map used primarily for most Search and Rescue missions. All the data is loaded to the harddrive.

Delorme Topo – This map has Topographic information as well as more updated highway information.

Delorme Street Atlas – This has fairly current highway information and can be used for route planning

Precision Mapping – This is a specialized application and only used with the APRS software.

County GIS Mapping – This is also specialized and used for specific address identification. It is rarely used and most of the operators have not been trained to use this one.

Currently the Delorme maps are not loaded to the hard drive and the appropriate CD-ROM needs to be in the D: drive in order to access the data. The CD-ROM discs are located in the basket in the overhead cupboard above the map support computer.

One of the more critical functions we perform is the creation and maintenance of the ICS Form 309 or Communications Log. One of the first things we need to do after the MCU is up and operational is to get the Laptop Computer turned on and a Communications Log initiated. Key entries include:

- Time MCU was Operational
- Name of the mission
- Identification of communications team members who are deployed
- Identification of the Incident Commander
- Location of the MCU / Incident Command Post

The Communications Log should be a written record of key events of the mission. This may include recording various reports from search and rescue teams as they conduct operations including locations of various items they have located or locations they have searched. On other types of missions it may include recording exchanges of information between other deployed elements that we hear on the radio. While it may not be a word-for-word record of what was said, it should be a fairly complete gist of what was said. We are frequently asked about past events and the log is the best source of what happened and when it happened. Finally, it is sometimes important just to record events that are related to us, not necessarily something we heard off the radio. If in doubt, write it down.

And finally, please use the "Read-Back" technique of anything there is a question about the accuracy of the information. This is particularly important when capturing numbers such as grid coordinates, addresses, and phone numbers. If you are unfamiliar with the technique, it is simply repeating the information you received or heard back to the originator and having them confirm you have it correct.

That's it for tonight. One final thank you for all your support in the past year. It has been a challenging one for several of us and I feel blessed to have such a great group of volunteers as members of the Cochise County ARE S/RACE S unit. I am certainly looking toward a happier one in the new year. So let's go down the roster for comments.

*Bob*  
Robert L Hollister

**Thought for the day:**

*The irony of life is that, by the time you're old enough to know your way around, you're not going anywhere.*