

SJNCERT NEWSLETTER 2024 Vol 1



This Could Happen to You!

Whew! That was a noisy windstorm last night! You suddenly realize that the neighbor's 80 foot tall cedar tree is now in your living room, and the building inspector is red-tagging your house! You are now homeless! Your oldest son shuts off the gas and water service valves, and your husband turns off the main circuit breaker. Everyone grabs their Go-Bag backpacks, and you switch on your GMRS handheld radio.

Fortunately, your SJNCERT block captain has already set up a Neighborhood Command Post (NCP) in her garage, after the power had been out for two hours. It turns out that there is no power, Internet, or cell phone/9-1-1 service west of Hwy 87!

The District 6 CERT Command Center (DCCC) is being set up at the American Legion Hall. The D6 DCCC radio operator has opened a Check-In net on the GMRS repeater, and asks if there are any stations with emergency traffic. Your NCP captain has been monitoring her GMRS radio, and responds that one family with two adults and two children needs shelter.

The D6 DCCC captain opens a Request For Assistance "Ticket" by filling out a "Shelter" index card with the number "6S1," your name, neighborhood, time, and date.

The D6 DCCC radio operator immediately announces that a new ticket "6S1" has been opened for a family in the Greylands Neighborhood of District 6 needing shelter.'

The D6 DCCC scribe includes Ticket 6S1 in the "Shelter" section of the D6 Status Report text file, scheduled for transmission to SJ EOC via VARA-FM at 3 P.M.

By 6 P.M., a Rose Garden neighbor has offered your family the use of their travel trailer for temporary shelter. SJ EOC is arranging to open Camden and Bascom Community Centers for shelter operation.

The above scenario illustrates how SJNCERT is planning to serve their neighbors, while operating over 181 square miles in the tenth most populous city in the U.S. Currently SJNCERT operates three GMRS radio repeaters, five VARA-FM amateur radio stations, and has access to a 1.25M VHF amateur radio repeater in Almaden Valley. GMRS and VARA-FM Check-in nets are held weekly. VHF nets are held monthly. Communications exercises with SJ RACES are held quarterly. SJNCERT volunteers are trained for both field and home operation. Amateur radio operators are used for data transmission via VARA-FM. This is all coordinated using radio operating frequencies listed on the SJNCERT.org website.

We prepare and practice so our SJNCERT training and communications skills can be put to use, no matter what the need may be, or when.

John Nourse (District 6) is a retired electrical engineer and SJ RACES member, assisting SJNCERT in coordination of radio communications between RACES and CERT.