



International Amateur Radio Union Region 1

Europe, Middle East, Africa and Northern Asia

Founded 1950



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SUBJECT		Center of Activity Frequencies for Emergency Traffic	
Society	SRAL	Country:	Finland
Committee:	C4	Paper number:	34
Contact:	Tapani Nisula, OH5BM	e-mail:	tapani.nisula@kolumbus.fi

A proposal from the first Global Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Conference, GAREC-2005, to IARU Regions 1, 2, and 3

The first Global Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Conference, (GAREC-2005), Tampere, Finland, 13 – 14 June 2005,

recommends

that the next competent conferences of IARU Regions 1, 2, and 3

should consider

the establishment of a Center of Activity Frequency for emergency traffic in the 15, 17, 20, 40 and 80 metre bands. These Center of Activity Frequencies should be established on a world wide basis ensuring the same frequencies in all of the 3 regions.

Additional proposal:

In recognition of the long tradition of the city of Tampere in emergency telecommunications, and as the host of GAREC-2005, the Conference

Proposes furthermore that center of activity frequencies determined in the sense of the above proposal shall be known as: ***The Tampere Frequencies***

Enclosed: Background notes

Background Information

Proposal for establishing a “Center of Activity” Frequency for Emergency Traffic on the 15, 17, 20, 40, and 80 meter bands, a proposal from the first Global Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Conference, GAREC-2005, to IARU Regions 1, 2, and 3.

The issue of pre-defined frequencies for emergency communications was discussed as one of the possible measures to facilitate the role of the Amateur Radio Service in emergency communications. The meeting considered in particular the following points:

- Its flexibility is a main strength of the amateur radio service. The dynamic assignment of operating frequencies within the IARU band plans is a key element of this flexibility.
- Given the traffic load, in particular on the bands likely to be most useful for emergency traffic, it would not be realistic to expect operators to keep specific frequencies free of traffic at all times.
- In an emergency situation, an operator will first of all listen for any possibly reachable station, and call this station on its operating frequency in order to establish initial contact.
- Depending on the nature of the event and of the expected duration of emergency traffic and the possible involvement of additional stations, it would then be appropriate to move the operation near a center of activity. This would facilitate access to such a net for additional stations wishing to offer their assistance. The proposal therefore refers to a center of activity for emergency traffic rather than to emergency frequencies or emergency calling frequencies.
- The amateur radio service does not have the mechanisms for mandatory monitoring of specific frequencies such as were defined e.g. in the maritime service in its pre-GMDSS procedures. In the absence of such a “radio watch” it is thus not likely that an emergency call on a pre-determined, but not permanently monitored, frequency would be noticed.
- An emergency net might have to split up into different sub-nets, possibly using different modes. The definition of “centres of activity” will allow operating such sub-nets with appropriate spacing just above or below the main network, making these sub-nets easy to locate. This also applies if the concept of a net control station sending stations handling traffic from a main net or calling frequency to working frequencies. A single, pre-defined “emergency frequency” would in any case not be sufficient for this most common mode of net operation.
- The determination of appropriate center frequencies will require a review of the band plans and during GAREC-2005 neither the necessary expertise nor the time to obtain competent views were available. The center frequencies should be acceptable for all three IARU regions. The next conference competent to consider the GAREC-2005 proposal is scheduled for September 2005, for Region 1. Possible proposals should already be cleared with Regions 2 and 3 prior to a submission to the forthcoming Region 1 conference; this will facilitate their adoption by competent regional conferences in Regions 2 and 3. A process to do so by e-mail has been initiated.
- On its VHF/UHF bands the amateur radio services uses actual channels. Their actual assignment is however primarily a matter of national coordination. A station will initiate an emergency call on the channel locally in use or on the locally reachable repeater(s). “Center of activity” frequencies for VHF/UHF are therefore not proposed. An international coordination in border areas is of course desirable, but will in any case not be possible for a complete IARU region.

A definition of “Center of Activity” frequencies for some of the HF bands therefore appears as the most appropriate way, to facilitate emergency traffic without the need to establish a “no transmission” policy for certain frequencies or an equally unrealistic “mandatory radio watch” on such channels.