

SHINGLETOWN EMERGENCY RADIO AUTH 473 378 2327 FMT KILO 1 APPEND F1
FOLLOWING PROTOCOL IS BASED UPON OPINION OF LEGAL COUNSEL.

Communications with the FCC is in process on this matter.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL – NON HAMs: [updated DRAFT 12/17/2020]

IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS INVOLVING “ESSENTIAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS IN CONNECTION WITH THE IMMEDIATE SAFETY OF HUMAN LIFE AND IMMEDIATE PROTECTION OF PROPERTY”

– if there are not enough Ham stations to help, the SER Plan will use Non Hams on Ham frequencies to facilitate the Shingletown Emergency Radio Plan. FCC Rule 97.403 further advises that the above applies “when normal communication systems are not available.” During such emergency SER Net activations (e.g., FIRE NETs, evacuations from wildfires, major earthquakes, etc...), “normal communications systems” ARE, IN THE OPINION OF LEGAL COUNSEL, factually “not available”. Discussion follows.

BY DEFINITION, A SHINGLETOWN WILD FIRE INVOLVES THE IMMEDIATE SAFETY OF HUMAN LIFE AND THE IMMEDIATE PROTECTION OF PROPERTY. FURTHERMORE, SHINGLETOWN IS AT THE TOP OF CALIFORNIA’S LIST OF AREAS TO BE HIT BY WILDFIRE. DURING 2020, SER FIRE NETS WERE ACTIVATED NUMEROUS TIMES DUE TO WILDLAND FIRES.

THE IMMEDIATE ISSUE CONCERNS THE FCC REQUIREMENT THAT “NORMAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS [BE] NOT AVAILABLE”, BEFORE NON LICENSED INDIVIDUALS CAN USE HAM FREQUENCIES.

A CLEAR EXAMPLE WOULD BE THAT YOUR SPOUSE FELL DOWN A MOUNTAIN CLIFF AND HAS A BROKEN BACK. YOU HAVE NO ABILITY TO CALL FOR HELP (YOUR CELL PHONE IS BROKEN). YOU HAVE A HAM RADIO AND CAN REACH THE REPEATER ON THE DISTANT MOUNTAIN. THE USE OF THE HAM FREQUENCY BY YOU, A NON LICENSED PERSON, WOULD BE PERMISSIBLE.

IN CONTRAST, UNDER A SER PLAN EMERGENCY NET ACTIVATION (E.G., A WILDLAND FIRE IN SHINGLETOWN), HAM OPERATORS ARE NEEDED IMMEDIATELY TO FILL INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS FOR AN OPERATING EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS NET. IN THE EVENT THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH HAM OPERATORS TO FILL THE VOID, THE ISSUE IS WHETHER NON LICENSED PERSONS CAN BE USED TO HELP DURING SUCH EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS NET.

ONE VIEW IS THAT IF THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH HAMs, THEN THOSE EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION FUNCTIONS JUST WILL NOT BE DONE. THUS, FOR EXAMPLE, NO STATION WILL DO MAPPING AS TO THE FIRES LOCATION, DIRECTION OF TRAVEL AND DISTANCE FROM HOMES; AND / OR NO STATION WILL BE AVAILABLE TO MONITOR CAL FIRE DISPATCH, ETC...). WHEN VIEWED FROM ANY LOGICAL PERSPECTIVE, SUCH VIEWPOINT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE. RISKING THE LIFE OF YOUR FAMILY AND NEIGHBORHOOD, AND POTENTIALLY ALL OF SHINGLETOWN (LIKE THE CAMP FIRE IN PARADISE, CALIFORNIA) TO A RAGING WILD LAND FIRE IS DEVOID OF COMMON SENSE.

SO THE QUESTION APPEARS TO BE – ARE NORMAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS NOT AVAILABLE? IN THIS REGARD, ANOTHER VIEW MIGHT BE THAT FIRE CONTROL MUST FIRST MAKE TELEPHONE CALLS TO SEE WHO CAN HELP OUT. THUS, DURING AN ACTIVE WILDFIRE, THIS VIEW HOLDS THAT YOU ARE TO WASTE VALUABLE TIME IN AN ATTEMPT TO REACH PEOPLE THAT ARE NOT RESPONDING TO REQUESTS FOR HELP ON THE EMERGENCY FREQUENCY, BY USING YOUR PHONE TO TRY TO “CALL” PEOPLE YOU DON’T EVEN KNOW.

REASONABLE QUESTIONS UNDER THIS “OPTION” INCLUDE: WHO ARE YOU GOING TO CALL? WHAT IS THEIR PHONE NUMBER? IS THEIR PHONE WORKING? ARE THEY EVEN IN THE AREA? HAVE THEY ALREADY EVACUATED? IS YOUR PHONE WORKING? WILL YOUR PHONE STOP WORKING DURING COMMUNICATIONS? THE FACT IS THAT YOU DON’T HAVE ANY OF THIS INFORMATION!

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YOU DON'T KNOW WHO IS ON FREQUENCY, AND DON'T KNOW THEIR CAPABILITIES UNTIL YOU TALK TO THEM. THE ONLY WAY TO ACTUALLY TALK TO THOSE ON FREQUENCY IS TO USE THE FREQUENCY THAT YOU ARE ACTUALLY BOTH ON DURING THE EMERGENCY.

AT THE POINT THAT NO HAMS ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP DURING AN EMERGENCY NET. FIRE CONTROL (FOR EXAMPLE) IS GOING TO NEED HELP FROM NON HAMS. YOUR REAL GOAL IS FOR SOMEONE TO PERFORM A SPECIFIC TASK RELATED TO THE EMERGENCY. FOR EXAMPLE – SOMEONE TO MONITOR CAL FIRE DISPATCH AND RELAY REPORTS INTO THE FIRE NET. IF A NON HAM RESPONDS TO YOUR REQUEST FOR HELP, THAT MEANS HE IS ON FREQUENCY. YOU CAN CONFIRM HE CAN MONITOR THE REQUIRED FREQUENCY. AT THIS POINT IN TIME, YOUR NORMAL COMMUNICATIONS WITH THIS STATION IS THE RADIO! IN FACT, IT IS THE ONLY COMMUNICATION YOU HAVE.

COMBINE THE ABOVE CIRCUMSTANCES WITH THE FACT THAT IN THE SHINGLETOWN AREA, RELAY FROM CELL PHONES IS NOT RELIABLE (AND MANY TIMES NON EXISTENT). FURTHER, THERE IS THE HISTORY OF LAND LINE FAILURES IN SHINGLETOWN AND REPEATED INTERNET FAILURES. DURING FEBRUARY, 2019, SHINGLETOWN HAD A COMPLETE COMMUNICATIONS BLACKOUT DURING SEVERE SNOW STORMS WITH A TOTAL ELECTRICAL POWER OUTAGE. THERE WAS NO ABILITY TO CALL 911 OR RECEIVE ANY TYPE OF REVERSE 911 CALL. IT WAS A 100% COMMS FAILURE. THE ONLY EXCEPTION WAS HAM RADIO. PEOPLE WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS WERE STRANDED, WITH OVER 3 FEET OF SNOW, AND NO ABILITY TO ASK FOR OR GET HELP.

ADDITIONALLY, TELEPHONE CALLS RECEIVED BY **FIRE CONTROL** DURING EMERGENCY NETS HAS RESULTED IN STOPPING OF THE EMERGENCY NETS TO “ANSWER THE PHONE”. THIS CAN RESULT IN UP TO 3 EMERGENCY NETS BEING INTERRUPTED AT ONE TIME. FURTHERMORE, TELEMARKETERS CALL. WHEN YOU HANG UP, THE LINE DOESN'T DISCONNECT FOR A WHILE.

DURING A FIRE NET, FIRE CONTROL IS GOING TO BE MONITORING 3 RADIOS, PLUS, MOST LIKELY, DOING TRIANGULATION (THIS INVOLVES OBTAINING LAT/LONG AND POSTING FIRE LOCATIONS TO A MAP, AND POSTING WIND DIRECTION AND WIND SPEED TO THE MAP, ETC...), RUNNING THE FIRE NET (AND POSSIBLY A NEIGHBORHOOD NET); TAKING NOTES; AND DIRECTING FIRE NET TRAFFIC. SUCH IS A STRESSFUL AND A HEAVY WORKLOAD. NO OTHER HAMS HAVE BOTHERED TO LEARN TO DO THE TRIANGULATION FUNCTION, OTHER THAN MYSELF.

MOREOVER, DURING OCTOBER, 2020, PG&E DID A POWER “SAFETY” SHUT OFF DURING A PERIOD OF HIGH FIRE DANGER. THIS RESULTED IN LOSS OF ELECTRICAL POWER TO ALL OF SHINGLETOWN WHILE AN ACTIVATED ONGOING EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS FIRE NET WAS OPERATING DUE TO TWO (2) WILDLAND FIRES CONCURRENTLY BURNING (AT BOTH THE EAST AND WEST SIDES OF SHINGLETOWN). STATIONS USED BATTERY AND OTHER EMERGENCY BACK UP POWER TO CONTINUE THE EMERGENCY FIRE NET. ALSO, THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH HAM OPERATORS TO FULLFILL ALL OF THE COMMUNICATION TASKS ESSENTIAL TO SER EMERGENCY NET OPERATIONS.

SUCH COMBINATION OF FACTORS, THE CONDITIONS EXISTING IN SHINGLETOWN (RUGGED TERRAIN, ETC...) COMBINED WITH THE RAPID AND EXPLOSIVE SPEED OF TRAVEL OF WILDFIRES IN CALIFORNIA, (WITH DEADLY CONSEQUENCES TO RESIDENTS) FACTUALLY RENDERS “NORMAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS” AS BEING “UNAVAILABLE” DURING THESE TYPES OF EMERGENCIES. ACCORDINGLY, NON HAMS WILL BE UTILIZED IN ACCORDANCE WITH FCC GUIDELINES. IN THE EVENT A HAM BECOMES AVAILABLE, THE NON HAM WOULD BE DEACTIVATED AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE. THIS IS BOTH FOLLOWING THE FCC RULES AND THE SPIRIT BEHIND THOSE RULES. ADDITIONALLY, FOLLOW SER PROCEDURES SO THE SYSTEM CAN FUNCTION PROPERLY. K6PDS