

Saratoga Emergency Communicator Information (Grab and Go)

Activation and Response --- if you are reading this, you have probably already been activated by (1) a telephone call or message via Alert SCC, or (2) a telephone call from another Saratoga ham radio operator or City official. Listen to the K6SA repeater on 146.655 MHz for information and instructions and be prepared to report to the EOC (either the main at City Hall or the alternate at the Fire Station in downtown Saratoga).

If you have not been previously sworn in as a SARATOGA Disaster Service Worker (DSW), you must register and be sworn in as a DSW before accepting an assignment. Net Control will direct you to the appropriate location to do so. If you already have a Saratoga DSW badge, make sure it hasn't expired. The DSW badge MUST be issued by the agency that activates you – a County badge or a Cupertino badge is of no use in Saratoga, and vice versa.

Spontaneous unaffiliated volunteers (SUVs), individuals who are not DSWs, can provide information from their location but cannot be given a specific assignment until sworn in as a DSW. You do not need to be a SARA member to participate.

Be sure to bring food, water, sunscreen, a hat and jacket as well as your radio go-kit and a pen or pencil. Your family takes priority. Don't leave home until all personal matters are taken care of.

Program your radio as follows:

1. K6SA primary repeater: 146.655 MHz (minus offset, PL of 114.8 Hz)
2. Repeater output simplex: 146.655 MHz (PL of 114.8 Hz encode only is recommended). If the primary repeater fails, we stay on the output frequency and operate simplex.
3. Alternate simplex: 146.505 MHz (no PL)
4. Second alternate simplex: 146.595 MHz (no PL).
5. (Optional) K6SA secondary repeater: 443.150 MHz (positive offset, PL of 100.0 Hz). Use this repeater if contact with the 146.655 MHz primary repeater is marginal. The two repeaters are usually linked.

Continually monitor the Saratoga primary repeater on 146.655 MHz unless instructed to do otherwise.

Test your equipment before leaving home. Test your equipment again before leaving on assignment. Make sure you can communicate via your radio. Put your spare battery pack where you can find it.

If you are one of the first on the repeater and others begin to join you, take the initiative to act as temporary Net Control to maintain some kind of order and organization, and to keep track of which stations have checked in along with any reports they may have. Pass the responsibility on to someone else later if you feel that they are more qualified. Eventually the EC, AEC or his/her delegate will assume responsibility for the net.

Once checked into a net, stay on the net until released. If Net Control loses track of you, you become part of the problem instead of the solution.

Keep all communications brief and to the point. Provide only the information requested.

Avoid using expressions and codes not familiar to everyone. No amateur radio “Q” Signals, CB 10-Codes, police call jargon, etc.

Use your judgement in the use of phonetics. Use them when requested to do so. The ITU Phonetic Alphabet (Alpha, Bravo, Charlie) is preferred, but when in doubt use whatever comes to mind.

Saratoga ham radio communication will normally originate from the radio(s) at the Saratoga EOC. Temporary alternate locations such as someone’s home or a parking lot may be utilized, especially early in the event before the EOC is formally activated.

Ham radio personnel operating in the EOC should be aware that the EOC follows the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) organization and rules. That does not affect us directly except to know that our interface is with the Communications Branch of the Logistics Section. Respect the personnel manning the positions in the EOC – they are there on business and probably feeling pressure.

At least two operators are required at the radios in the EOC, with three desired. There will be ongoing communication between (1) Saratoga hams and the Saratoga EOC, (2) between the Saratoga EOC hams and the County EOC hams, and (3) the Saratoga EOC-to-County EOC Public Service radio. A non-ham may be utilized to operate the Public Service radio.

The noise level in the EOC when fully manned is very high and makes radio communication and communication between operators in the EOC difficult. Record keeping and message handling add to the workload. Accurate communication and record keeping is mandatory. Forms, like it or not, are necessary. There is an adequate supply at the EOC, take some with you if you leave on an assignment.

A ham radio operator should be assigned to each of the following locations as soon as possible after activation (TBR):

1. Saratoga Sub-Acute Hospital
2. Our Lady of Fatima Villa
3. Saratoga Retirement Community

The Santa Clara County EOC (aka Operational Area EOC) will be activated in the event of a significant (County-wide) scenario. They will typically establish the following nets of interest to Saratoga:

1. Message Net for official traffic between cities and other served agencies,
2. Command Net for informal traffic between County staff, EC’s and supervisors,
3. Resource Net for gathering and providing information.

These County nets are all on amateur radio frequencies. The Saratoga EOC will monitor the Resource Net and the Message Net to the extent possible. Any communication with the County EOC should be via the Saratoga Net Control.

Don’t accept any assignment that you’re not comfortable with. Don’t accept any assignment that requires expertise beyond that of radio communicator or other non-hazardous function. Be open to accept assignments not related to radio if the need arises.