**Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service**
**Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES®)**
**Garland, Texas**

## Alert Methods

Effective 02.2017

The primary responsibility of Garland Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) is communications support for the City of Garland Office of Emergency Management. A call for activation may come at any time, day or night, on any day of the week. As an active unit, it is necessary that you equip yourself with a method of notification that will alert you of a RACES Net activation.

**Garland RACES utilizes several methods for notification of a RACES alert or Net.**

1. Short Messaging Service (SMS) – With just about every person in the nation carrying a cell phone and the demise of paging services, RACES has opted for using Short Messaging Services (SMS) for our alerting mechanism. SMS is a text messaging service component of phone, web, or mobile communication systems (Cell). It allows the exchange of short text messages of approximately 140 characters in the alert message.

    - **Slack** - This is the current preferred alerting method. The GRACES account is 'Garland RACES' (garlandraces.slack.com). There are several "Channels" in use with the account. The # notifications channel is used for alerts and key information. The other channels are used for non-alert information. The account is controlled by invite only. Contact the RO or ARO/Administration for invite.

2. **A-Tone** – The A-Tone is a Dual Tone Multi Frequency (DTMF) "A" tone transmitted on a repeaters output frequency to notify personnel of an alert situation or an upcoming net. This tone is used by Garland RACES as part of the net preamble to alert members of an upcoming net.
    - A-Tone Decoder – An A-Tone Decoder is a device that is connected to the auxiliary audio jack (external speaker/earphone jack) of a receiver (radio or scanner) which is tuned to one of the two repeaters utilized by RACES, 146.660(-) or 147.240(+). A speaker is connected to the output of the Decoder. When an A-Tone frequency is sent on the repeater output frequency for a short duration the speaker circuit is enabled and the audio can be heard. An announcement will be made at the conclusion of A-Tone signal describing the purpose of the alert. An A-Tone decoder can be easily assembled from a hobby kit or parts from an electronics supply store. Schematics are readily available on the Internet.

      **Note: This alert method is no longer used in the Dallas RACES alert procedure.**

3. Repeater Tail Message – On the Garland Amateur Radio Club Repeater, 146.660, there are two tail messages pre-recorded into the controller. The message identifies a "RACES Net" on 146.660 or 147.240. This tail message is transmitted at intervals after the repeater has been keyed up.

**Dallas Area RACES Alert Methods for SkyWarn or Nets**

The National Weather Service (NWS) sends an SMS message to Dallas Area RACES Radio Officers and Net Control Stations indicating severe weather is in the area. Based on this information a SkyWarn net may be activated for the Dallas County as a whole or by local municipalities' OEM. Radio Officers or Net Control Stations in turn notify their respective groups.

In addition to the alert methods above, Dallas City RACES transmits a Dual Tone Squelch System (DTSS) DTMF tone of "0 0 0" during the initiation of net activations A Continuous Tone-Coded Squelch System (CTCSS) Sub-audible tone of 114.8 is transmitted during net conditions on 146.880- repeater. You may find this information in the "Cloud Cowboy Reference Manual."

If you have any questions about Alert Information, please contact the Radio Officer or Net Control Station. Remember, to properly function in Garland RACES/ARES, it is necessary to have a reliable method of contact for activation.