

18 February 2018

In response to:

DA 17-1180

Released December 7, 2017

*PUBLIC SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY BUREAU SEEKS COMMENT ON RESPONSE EFFORTS
UNDERTAKEN DURING 2017 HURRICANE SEASON*

PS Docket No. 17-344

With regards to question 8 on page 5 of the document, I would like to respond:

8. *To what extent were response efforts facilitated by amateur radio operators? Going forward, should efforts be made to increase the use of amateur radio services in connection with the planning, testing and provision of emergency response and recovery communications?*

The Amateur Radio Service, as defined in Part 97, has the potential to assist in emergency scenarios. Regardless of the modes of operation employed (voice, digital, etc.) or frequency of operation (HF, VHF, etc.) amateur radio operators need to be trained to provide meaningful support in an appropriate capacity. There seems to be too much of an emphasis on the part of the ARRL promoting amateur radio's "raison d'etre" as dependent solely on providing emergency communications services. Providing reflective vests, pins and badges, however, does not automatically confer competency. Owning a radio does not automatically make you a "superhero" ready at a moment's notice to render assistance.

I would encourage the FCC to view amateur radio as a learning platform for radio technology as well as an alternate means of communication should the primary means of communication fail. Secondly, I would encourage the FCC to work with the existing emergency response groups such as ARES/RACES to have them demonstrate competency in drills along with FEMA, state and local governments, etc. Also, I would encourage the FCC to view amateur radio as an additional "tool" (i.e., education and training platform) that could enhance the capabilities of emergency professionals (medical staff, firefighters, etc.) should their primary means of communication fail.

Respectfully,

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