



FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
FEMA NATIONAL RADIO SYSTEM (FNARS) PROGRAM OFFICE
P.O. BOX 129
Berryville, Virginia 22611

Voice: (540) 542-2192 DSN: 380-2192

Facsimile: (540) 542-3319 DSN: 380-3319

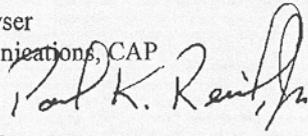
July 6, 2001

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Harold R. Collins
Chief, Air Force MARS

Mr. Robert L. Sutton
Chief, Army MARS

Mr. Bo G. Lindfors
Chief, Navy-Marine Corps MARS

Mr. Malcolm C. Kyser
Director of Communications, CAP

FROM: Paul K. Reid, Jr. 
FNARS Program Manager

SUBJECT: Use of Non-NTIA Compliant Radios on FEMA Frequencies

The MARS and Civil Air Patrol communicators have always been strong supporters of FEMA and other interagency communications programs. This is especially true of the National Emergency Coordination Net (NECN) where your stations generally account for over 50% of the check-ins. The SHARES program also relies heavily on your support.

During the past two NECN exercises several stations were observed to be operating with equipment that did not suppress the unwanted sideband and/or were off frequency. Since FEMA was using both sidebands during these exercises, this presented a problem. Although this interference to an exercise was without real consequence, had it been a real emergency the outcome might have been quite different.

The frequencies that FEMA uses to support the NECN, SHARES, and other nets are assigned to us by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). In order to insure interoperability and reduce interference to adjacent channel users, NTIA has established certain technical standards that radios must comply with if they are used on NTIA assigned frequencies. FEMA has no exemption from these standards and believes that compliance will reduce the above type incidents.

Effective 31 December 2001, all stations, including MARS and CAP, that operate on NECN or any other FEMA frequencies must use NTIA compliant equipment. It is my understanding that many of the radios now owned and operated by your members can be upgraded to meet NTIA standards, should they choose to do so. The Civil Air Patrol National Technology Center publishes a list of these radios on their www home page.

I hope that you can encourage your membership to transition into NTIA compliant radios. I believe this will ensure that MARS and CAP continue to play an important part in supporting interagency communications programs.