An Overview of the SCCo ARES/RACES Credentialing Program

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Environment and Purpose of Credentialing

- Credentialing in technical fields (usually called certification) has been used for 20+ years to verify an individual's ability

- Credentialing is becoming more prevalent in Emergency Management, especially where mutual aid may be utilized

- The State of California has a credentialing program for EOC positions

- Served agencies are increasingly aware of credentialing and are expecting team members to be credentialed

- SCCo ARES/RACES has had a credentialing program for Mutual Aid Communicators since 2009

- We can better support our served agencies by expanding our credentialing program to all operators (not just MACs)

Comparison of Program Design vs. new State of CA EOC Credentialing

	State of CA	SCCo ARES/RACES Program
Started	Recently	2009
Roles	46 EOC positions	Field, Net Control, Packet, Shadow, HF*
Types	III, II, I	IV, III, II, I
ICS/SEMS Training	Yes	Yes
Position-specific training	Yes	Yes
Knowledge testing	Yes	Yes
Experience required	Yes	Yes
Performance evaluation	Yes	Yes
Time-bounded	Yes	Yes
Recertification	Yes	Yes

* HF Credential is TBD

Goals for Enhanced SCCo RACES Credentials

- Provide opportunities for everyone to earn credentials
  - No need to take an assignment outside one's home city
- Expand number of credentialed operators who can respond to a given location
  - In-city operators plus MACs
- Use proven (10 years) methods from the MAC program to identify qualified people
- Make it easier to predefine requirements for any assignment
  - Served agencies know what to ask for
- Reassure served agencies of assigned operator's capabilities
- Maintain consistency and integrity of credentials
  - Objective; no "gotchas"; no "gimmes"

Former:
SCCo ARES/RACES MAC Qualifications

Resource	Field Comms	Net Control	Packet	Shadow	HF (future)
Type I	Field Comm I	Net Control I	Packet I	Shadow I	HF I
Type II	Field Comm II	Net Control II	Packet II	Shadow II	HF II
Type III	Field Comm III	Net Control III	Packet III	Shadow III	HF III
Type IV	Mutual Aid Communicator				
Type V	Licensed Amateur Radio Operator w/DSW (no credential)				

Current:
SCCo ARES/RACES Technical Credentials

Resource	Field Comms	Net Control	Packet	Shadow	HF (future)
Type I	Field Comm I	Net Control I	Packet I	Shadow I	HF I
Type II	Field Comm II	Net Control II	Packet II	Shadow II	HF II
Type III	Field Comm III	Net Control III	Packet III	Shadow III	HF III
Type IV	Type IV Communicator				
Type V	Licensed Amateur Radio Operator w/DSW (no credential)				

The Type IV Communicator credential has essentially the same as the former entry-level Mutual Aid Communicator, minus the requirement to commit to mutual aid support

Comparison of Capabilities by Credential Type

	Type V	Type IV	Type III	Type II
Equipped for up to 12 hr shift	Unknown	Yes	Eval	Eval
Respond anywhere in jurisdiction	Unknown	Yes	Eval	Eval
Basic Net Usage Procedures	Unknown	Yes	Eval	Eval
Simple Damage/status reports	Unknown	Yes	Eval	Eval
Handle low traffic levels	Unknown	Yes	Eval	Eval
3rd Party Traffic	Unknown	Unknown	Eval	Eval
Low-to-medium traffic levels	Unknown	Unknown	Eval	Eval
Manage problems	Unknown	Unknown	Eval	Eval
Equipped w/ mobile radio, ant	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Eval
Two Nets, Cross band	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Eval
Medium-to-high traffic levels	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Eval

Comparison of Assignments by Credential Type

	Type V	Type IV	Type III	Type II
Basic Net Usage, Status Reports • Parades, festivals, races • Checkpoints, flood watch • Damage surveys • CERT team support (simple rprts)	Unknown	Yes	Eval	Eval
3rd Party Traffic (Low/Med) • CERT team support (complex rpts) • Schools, shelters • Jurisdiction EOC (smaller) • Hospitals • Allied health facilities • Fire stations	Unknown	Unknown	Eval	Eval
3rd Party Traffic (Med/High), 2 nets • Med Health Joint Ops Ctr (MHJOC) • Jurisdiction EOC (larger) • County EOC	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Eval

Credential Requirements

- Prerequisites
  - Communicator Type IV: administrative
  - Other credentials
- Training
  - ARES/RACES Training
  - Emergency Management Training (FEMA, CSTI, SCCo OEM)
- Participation / Experience
  - Nets, exercises, public service events, emergency incidents
- Equipment
  - Standard, credential-specific
- Knowledge
  - Radio/station familiarity, managing problems
- Operator Skill
  - Peer-reviewed performance during an exercise/event/incident

Evaluations

- Communicator Type IV performance is evaluated by the local jurisdiction's Radio Officer
- All other credentials: evaluated by Credential Evaluator
  - Has same or higher-level technical credential
  - Also holds a credential in how to perform fair, objective evaluation
- Sounds scary, but isn't
  - Operate your position as normal; evaluator is a silent observer
    - May inject additional traffic, depending on the situation
  - Follow SCCo ARES/RACES Performance Standards & Best Practices
  - Net operations, message passing, paperwork according to our training
  - Do it right and pass
  - If you mess up, study and practice more, then try again

Credential Award Process

- Track progress
  - Each candidate is responsible for tracking their own progress
- Obtain sign-offs
  - Communicator Type IV: local jurisdiction Radio Officer
  - All other credentials: Credential Evaluator
- Submit documentation
  - To the Credential Program Manager or Evaluator
- Records review and update
  - By Credential Program Manager or Evaluator
- Notification
  - Typically by e-mail
- Print and laminate updated wallet card

Endorsement Overview

Builds on minimum technical credentials

Adds agency-specific requirements

Endorsements

- Identify resources that have the required RACES credentials *AND* meet the additional, agency-specific requirements

Endorsements

Additional Agency-specific Requirements
• Administrative
• Training
• Experience
• Other …
Prerequisites
• Technical Credentials (F#, N#, P#, S#, H#)
• Other Endorsements

Existing Endorsements

- **Mutual Aid Communicator**
  - Communicator Type IV credential, plus …
- **County Fire Station Radio Operator**
  - Field Operator Type III and Packet Operator Type III credentials, plus …
- **County EOC Radio Operator**
  - Net Control Type III or Packet Operator Type III
  - Mutual Aid Communicator endorsement, plus …
- **County EOC RACES Unit Leader**
  - Net Control Type II and Packet Operator Type II
  - County EOC Radio Operator endorsement, plus …

Wallet Card

- Each credentialed operator can print and laminate their own wallet card

- Card expires annually, at end of January

- Reprint each February 1

- Keep with other ID badges from local jurisdiction and county

- Use when checking into resource net or staging

Herman Munster W6XRL4	
Credentials:	
Evaluator	**E2**
Field Comms	**F1**
HF Comms	**H2**
Net Control	**N3**
Packet Comms	**P2**
Shadow Comms	**S1**
Endorsements:	
Mutual Aid Comm	**MAC**
Fire Station Radio Oper	**FRO**
EOC Radio Operator	**ERO**
EOC RACES Unit Lead	**RUL**
Santa Clara County ARES/RACES	

Actual appearance may vary

Program Materials

Program Materials (online tour)

- Web page
  - https://www.scc-ares-races.org
- Program Handbook
  - Takes precedence over all other documents
- Forms
  - Credential Records
  - Endorsement Records
  - Approved Activity Requests
- Wallet Card

Getting Started

Communicator Type IV Credential

Communicator Type IV

1) Read the Program Handbook
   - The whole thing!
   - It's one of the requirements
   - Familiarize yourself with what's in there and how to find it
   - Most likely answers any question you might ever have
     - Remember, we've been doing this for 10+ years!

Santa Clara County ARES®/RACES

Amateur Radio Operator

Credentialing

Program Handbook

Version 3.0

Revised: 01-Jan-2020

Communicator Type IV

2) Go back and review details of Communicator Type IV

– Most active hams are probably 90% of the way done already!

Credentialing Program Handbook   v3.0 -- Rev: 01-Jan-2020

Communicator Type IV Credential

Phonetic designation for radio transmission is "Charlie Four"

Summary

Capabilities and Services

- Capable of performing basic communications assignments, perhaps with coaching
- Capable of handling low-to-medium traffic levels and simple operator-to-operator content
- May be deployed for up to 8 to 12-hour shift (but is prepared for 12 hours in the event of unforeseen problems)
- Equipped for portable and low-power mobile operations

Typical Assignments

- Field checkpoints and observations posts; rovers
- Damage surveys: Windshield surveys, Modified Mercalli surveys; flood level observations
- Crowd observation and reporting; public information assistance
- Lost child / lost parent assistance

Requirements

Administrative

- Must live or work in Santa Clara County or be an active participant in RACES activities within Santa Clara County, and must be willing and able to respond to requests for amateur radio support in their primary jurisdiction within Santa Clara County.
    - Individuals will pick a primary jurisdiction, which is the jurisdiction that will have first priority if the individual is needed. This is typically the individual's home city or the city where the individual works.
    - Note: Those seeking the Mutual Aid Communicator Endorsement can pick any primary jurisdiction within Santa Clara County, but if their primary jurisdiction doesn't need them, they must be willing and able to respond to requests elsewhere within Santa Clara County.
- Must be 18 years of age or older
- Must have a valid Technician class or higher Amateur Radio license
- Must have a valid California Driver's license or California State-issued Identification card
- Must have reliable transportation capable of meeting the needs of the assignment
- Must have read and be familiar with the entire "SCCo ARES/RACES Radio Operator Credentialing Program Handbook" (this document)
- Must have read and be familiar with the entire "SCCo ARES/RACES Performance Standards and Best Practices"
- Must be registered as a Disaster Service Worker Volunteer with their primary jurisdiction (the jurisdiction that is signing off on this credential)

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Communicator Type IV

3) Track your progress

- Radio officer (or designee) initials each completed requirement

- Note: Credential Record form is abbreviated version of requirements. Always refer to the handbook for the details.

SCCo RACES Credential Record — **Type IV Communicator**

Name: _____ Call Sign: _____ Jurisdiction: _____

All activities must be performed according to the Performance Standards. For specifics of each of these requirements, consult the Credentialing Program Handbook. Instructions are on the next page.

Radio Officer or Designee			Credential Requirements (completed within the last two years)
Date	Call Sign	Initials	
			Administrative
			Work/live/active in Santa Clara County; respond to primary jurisdiction
			18 years of age or older
			Valid Technician class or higher Amateur Radio license
			Valid California driver's license or State-issued ID card
			Reliable transportation for assignments
			Has read "SCCo ARES/RACES Credentialing Program Handbook"
			Has read "SCCo ARES/RACES Perf. Stds. & Best Practices"
			Registered with primary jurisdiction as Disaster Service Worker
			Training
			Santa Clara County ARES/RACES Training
			Intro to Emergency Communications (or equivalent)
			Fundamentals of Emergency Communications*
			Emergency Management Training*
			ICS-100 / IS-100: Intro to ICS
			ICS-200 / IS-200: ICS for Single Resources
			ICS-700 / IS-700: Intro to NIMS
			SEMS G606: Intro to SEMS
			Equipment
			All items in SCCo standard 2-hour Carry Kit
			All items in SCCo standard 12-hour Go Kit
			Knowledge
			Demonstrate personal radio familiarity per Credential handbook
			Participation (or equivalent, as determined by local jurisdiction RO)
			Min 8: Check into weekly city net
			Min 8: Monitor weekly SPECs or SVECS net
			Min 2: Radio oper duty at quarterly drills
			Min 1: Radio oper duty at approved functional or full-scale exercise
			Min 1: Radio oper duty at approved public service event or incident
			Performance
			Functioned effectively & professionally with served agency
			Has maturity and experience to perform according to "SCCo ARES/RACES Performance Standards and Best Practices"
			Ongoing Participation
			Agree to minimum training and participation requirements

Notes:
*See the Credentialing Program Handbook for exceptions to training class completion within the past two years.

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Communicator Type IV

4) Sign the back
   - Commit to minimum participation level and to operating according to standards
   - Radio Officer also signs

SCCo RACES Credential Record   **Type IV Communicator**

Signatures:

Candidate:
I have completed all of the requirements listed above as described in the Credentialing Program handbook. And I agree to maintain at least the minimum participation level required in the Credentialing Program Handbook and to abide by all methods and procedures defined in the Credentialing Program Handbook and the Performance Standards and Best Practices.

_____   _____   _____   _____
Print Name of Candidate   Signature of Candidate   Call Sign   Date

Radio Officer:
I have reviewed the requirements in the Credentialing Program Handbook for each of the above items and have verified that the candidate has fully completed each requirement as described in the handbook.

_____   _____   _____   _____
Print Name of Radio Officer   Signature of Radio Officer   Call Sign   Date

Usage instructions:
Candidate:

- It is the candidate's responsibility to maintain this record
- This document functions as a confirmation of completion of the credential requirements
- Bring this document with you when you meet with your local jurisdiction Radio Officer
- Have your local jurisdiction Radio Officer (or designee) initial each line item completed
- Retain the document as your "receipt" that you have completed the itemized requirements
- When all items are completed, the candidate and local jurisdiction Radio Officer sign above
- When completed and signed, consult the Credentialing Program Handbook for the submittal procedure

Radio Officer:

- The checklist above is an abbreviation of each requirement. Before initialing each requirement, review the complete requirement in the Credentialing Program handbook.
- The radio officer may delegate the responsibility of initialing the completion of individual requirements to a deputy or assistant.
- Only the radio officer for the jurisdiction can provide the final signature.

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For Radio Officers: Communicator Type IV

- Similar to former MAC program
- Verification process is now written out in one place – easy to follow instructions

Communicator Type IV Award

- Submit to the Program Manager
  - Credential Record (checklist)
  - Training certificates
  - Recommendation from local jurisdiction Radio Officer
  - (BTW, this is all in the Program Handbook!)

- Program manager will
  - Review records
    - Check training and participation records in activities database
  - Update activities database
  - Notify candidate

- Candidate prints and laminates wallet card

Helping Others in Need

Mutual Aid Communicator endorsement

Mutual Aid Communicator Endorsement

- In most cases, impacted cities will be short of resources
  - If your city is impacted, you'll appreciate help from others
  - Can you offer the same help to others?
  - If not, that's OK. But if you can, please do!

- It's easy:
  1. Earn Communicator Type IV (or higher) credential
  2. Agree to accept assignments anywhere in the county
  3. Register as SCCo DSW
  4. LiveScan and background check by SCCo Sheriff
  5. Recommendation from local jurisdiction Radio Officer
  6. Radio familiarity check by Credential Evaluator

What's Next

Field Operator Type III and more …

Next Step: Field Operator Type III

- Fully independent operator; 3rd party messages

Resource	Field Comms	Net Control	Packet	Shadow	HF (future)
Type I	Field Comm I	Net Control I	Packet I	Shadow I	HF I
Type II	Field Comm II	Net Control II	Packet II	Shadow II	HF II
Type III	Field Comm III	Net Control III	Packet III	Shadow III	HF III
Type IV	Communicator Type IV				
Type V	Licensed Amateur Radio Operator w/DSW (no credential)				

… and more

- Broaden your capabilities … or specialize … or both!
- Check desired endorsements for prerequisite credentials

Resource	Field Comms	Net Control	Packet	Shadow	HF (future)
Type I	Field Comm I	Net Control I	Packet I	Shadow I	HF I
Type II	Field Comm II	Net Control II	Packet II	Shadow II	HF II
Type III	**Field Comm III**	Net Control III	Packet III	Shadow III	HF III
Type IV		**Communicator Type IV**			
Type V	Licensed Amateur Radio Operator w/DSW (no credential)				

Support and Program Management

- Credential Discussion Group
  - Group: https://scc-ares-races.groups.io/g/credential
  - Info: https://www.scc-ares-races.org/discuss-groups.html

- Input and improvement to the program
  - Monthly SCCo ARES/RACES Special Interest Group (SIG) meeting
  - 4th Thursday of the Month @ SCCo EOC

- Program Manager
  - Submitting credential/endorsement records or training certificates
    - Use the program manager e-mail alias
  - Questions … but first
    - Check the program handbook
    - Ask on the Credential discussion group (if not personal/private)

Action Items for Existing Credential Holders

- **Communicator Type IV**
  - G606 "Intro to SEMS" is new requirement
  - Existing MACs have until 12/31/2020 to complete this class and submit certificate from CSTI (State of California)

- **All Type II credentials**
  - IS-800 "Intro to National Response Framework" is a new requirement
  - Existing Type II credential holders have until 12/31/2020 to complete this class and submit certificate from FEMA

Most Common Questions

- Why the 2-year time limit for completing requirements for a given credential?
  - We are constantly improving our procedures, training, documentation
  - To be relevant, training and experience needs to be current
  - Note: No time limit on EM courses (FEMA, CSTI, SCCo OEM)
- How/where do I submit records, training certificates?
  - The program manager e-mail alias

End

For more info:

https://www.scc-ares-races.org/credentials