



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMUNICATIONS RESERVE UNIT Frequently Asked Questions

- What is Cal CRU?

Cal CRU is an all-volunteer Emergency Communications (EMCOMM) organization, providing support to the Tactical Communications Branch (TCOMM) of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES).

- How is Cal CRU organized?

Like the Cal OES structure, Cal CRU is made up of three Administrative Regions (Coastal, Inland and Southern). Within those Administrative Regions, we have six Mutual Aid Regions (MARs), each served by a CRU MAR Officer and an individual CRU Team. While each CRU Team is normally responsible for their individual geographic area, common Cal OES equipment, standards and training enable CRU Team members to respond to any emergency situation anywhere within the State of California.

- How many members serve the Cal OES organization?

The Cal CRU program currently has about 100 members statewide.

- Who administers the Cal CRU organization?

Cal CRU is administered by both career, as well as volunteer management. For day-to-day operations, a career Cal OES Tactical Communications Chief manages the overall Cal CRU program as a CRU Program Administrator. The Chief CRU Officer, appointed by the Cal OES Tactical Communications Chief and reporting to the CRU Program Administrator, serves as a volunteer CRU Program Manager. Cal OES Tactical Communications Assistant Chiefs provide advice and support for the CRU Teams within their respective Regions.

During a deployment, CRU members fall under the management and supervision of the Cal OES Tactical Communications Assistant Chief for the geographic Region of the deployment.

- How does Cal CRU respond in an emergency?

Once activated, CRU members provide tactical, logistical and support communications for the Cal OES Tactical Communications Branch. A Tactical Communications Assistant Chief will make a determination whether TCOMM assets are needed for a deployment, and whether Cal CRU Teams will be needed to deploy those assets. If needed, Team members are alerted and polled for their availability. Mission deployment may last from one, to several days.

Once deployed, Cal CRU Teams may establish voice, digital or satellite communications to the scene of the incident, provide backhaul communications from the incident scene to the Cal OES State Operations Center or Regional Emergency Operations Center, or assist with the establishment of an emergency communications infrastructure, such as the installation and operation of portable communications repeaters, towers, and satellite equipment.

Team members may also provide communications support to our Cal OES Regional Emergency Operations Centers, to Mobile Incident Communications Support Units, or to the Cal OES State Operations Center in Sacramento.

- I live in a remote area of the State. Can I still become a Cal CRU member?

Perhaps. If you are an Amateur Radio Operator with a General class license of higher, you may become a CRU Relay Station from your home, responsible for passing traffic and information during an incident on one of our Cal OES HF communications nets. We generally recruit one or two Relay Stations from each of our 58 counties.

We generally request that Cal CRU members live within a 90-minute drive from one of our Cal OES State facilities to be able to participate in training, meetings and exercises, and to have the ability to respond with Cal OES assets to an incident in a timely manner.

- Is Cal CRU considered a RACES organization?

Yes. Cal CRU provides the RACES function to State facilities and agencies within California. Cal CRU was originally created to allow all Californians with an interest in providing Emergency Communications the ability to join us and contribute, something that was not possible in the Federal RACES guidelines. While under RACES guidelines, members must be currently licensed Amateur Radio operators. We saw the need for others who were not members of the Amateur Radio community, but who had an interest in Emergency Communications, with an organization that could utilize that interest within the State.

- I'm part of an existing California EMCOMM organization. Is it part of Cal CRU?

No. Cal CRU is responsible, under Federal FCC rules concerning RACES organizations, for providing State communications, between State agencies and facilities. RACES organizations in individual cities and counties are responsible for their respective jurisdictions, working in support of their Emergency Management entities within government.

While Cal CRU may provide advice and support to other RACES and EMCOMM organizations within California, Cal CRU has no operational authority or jurisdiction over those organizations. For example, a RACES organization in Santa Luisa County is responsible to the Santa Luisa County Emergency Manager, and not to the State. Cal CRU does provide assistance and support, such as the development of City and County RACES Plans.

For more information, refer to the 'RACES Guidance Book' under *Publications and Guides* on the Cal CRU website at:

<http://www.acscalifornia.org/docs/out/out.ViewDocument.php?documentid=1368&showtree=1>

(When asked to Login, please click the "**Login as Guest**" link just under the "Sign in" button)

- What prior background or experience do I need to join?

A good working knowledge of Public Safety communications systems, including voice, digital and satellite, is a plus. While many of our Cal CRU members are Amateur Radio operators, having a Ham Radio license is not a requirement for membership. Cal CRU members also should have a good grounding in the knowledge of how the Internet works, as well as digital network connectivity, packet radio and computer systems.

- What classes may I complete prior to joining Cal CRU?

Cal CRU members must complete the following as Team members:

ICS 100 – *Introduction to the Incident Command System*

ICS 200 – *ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents*

ICS 700 – *National Incident Management System (NIMS)*

ICS 800 – *National Response Framework*

Cal CRU Team members have also received specialized training as Incident Communications Technicians (COMT), and Communications Unit Leader (COML).

Cal CRU Staff Officers are encouraged to complete FEMA's *Professional Development Series*, and receive regular training in Leadership and Management skill building.

Information on these free online courses is available at www.training.fema.gov

- How often does Cal CRU respond to emergencies?

While Cal CRU may be requested during an emergency, we do not self-deploy. Like any other agency providing emergency response, how often Cal CRU responds depends on how often we are requested. While Cal CRU training continues on a regular, ongoing basis, Cal CRU Team deployments will depend on the particular needs of the incident.

Cal CRU members train for all communications emergencies, including earthquakes, floods, fires, or other incidents where the Public Safety communications infrastructure has been compromised. Team members also participate regularly in communications exercises and simulations, and conduct regular training, testing and maintenance on Cal OES vehicles and equipment.

- Where may I receive more information on the Cal CRU program?

Visit the Cal CRU website at www.acscalifornia.org. Click on the 'JOIN CRU' banner at the top of the page. When you click the link, you'll be directed to a form asking for your name, email address and callback number.

Once submitted, a Cal CRU Leadership Official will contact you and further explain the Cal CRU program.

Thank you for your interest!