

Emergency Response Communications (ERC) Simplex Frequency Policy for the Wasatch Front

For some time the demand for two-meter simplex frequencies by emergency communications organizations along the Wasatch Front of Utah has exceeded the number of designated simplex frequencies. In order to bring a degree of organization to emergency simplex operation and minimize potential interference, state ARRL and RACES leaders have assigned specific frequencies to recognized emergency communications organizations operating on the Wasatch Front. These frequency assignments have been published and are available on request.

ERC members desiring a simplex frequency assignment should be aware of the following:

1. **All** Wasatch Front two meter simplex frequencies have been assigned. There are no additional simplex frequencies available.
2. All simplex frequencies are available for use by all appropriately licensed amateurs. The simplex frequency assignments are essentially a "gentlemen's agreement" intended to bring order to simplex operation in an emergency.
3. There are five designated simplex frequencies in the 70 cm band. These are not assigned to any organization, but are available for general use. Although it appears that there are unassigned frequencies in the simplex portion of the 70 cm band, these frequencies have been assigned as control frequencies for repeaters and for repeater links and are not available for simplex use.
4. Organizations having assigned simplex frequencies do not "own" those frequencies. Any licensed amateur whose license authorizes him or her to operate on that frequency may do so provided his or her operation does not constitute malicious interference. Non-emergency operation by an individual or organization that interferes with the emergency operations of the assigned organization would be considered malicious interference.
5. It is not desirable for every group in an organization to have its own frequency. Operating on "private" frequencies in a disaster response actually makes the group less effective by isolating it from the rest of the organization. Being on a common frequency gives everyone access to available information and organizational resources.
6. Experience has shown that in an emergency more than one organization can use a single frequency effectively under the direction of a proficient net control operator
7. Coexistence on a simplex frequency is possible where users recognize that interference may be eliminated or reduced by using the minimum transmitter power required to communicate and by using directional antennas.

Individual ERC members should not submit frequency requests to the state frequency coordinator. Any need for an assigned two meter simplex frequency that is considered critical should be made known to the ERC Headquarters staff through the bishops' storehouse emergency communications specialist.

There are frequencies assigned to ERC for each of the three bishops' storehouse areas on the Wasatch Front. These frequencies may be used by more than one ERC group for regular net operation as well as for emergency operation. (If the emergency involves more than one unit all of the effected units will work together in the response.) During most of the emergencies experienced to date on the Wasatch Front, repeaters have remained in operation, thereby diminishing the need for simplex frequencies.

ERC groups and members shall operate consistent with the ARRL and State of Utah band plan as well as the coordinated and assigned frequencies published by the Utah Frequency Coordinating Committee.

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