

EmComm: Supporting Public Service Events - Krissy, KI7GJJ

One way to practice your Emergency Communication skills and have fun playing with radios and people that like radios is to support Public Service Events. This includes providing radio communications support for events such as races, parades, or bike rides. At these events you get practice using tactical callsigns, participating in a directed net, providing succinct communications, and practice using forms that would be used in a real emergency. You also get an opportunity to test your go-kit.



In these events you typically use your Ham Radio to provide communications among the various stations setup at the event. For example, in a race you provide communications among the aid stations and the start/finish line. You communicate participants who need assistance, aid stations that need supplies, and the location of various event personnel. Normally at these events, the event personnel provide the communications that need to be transmitted, but sometimes you may also provide the "eyes". Each event will have a communications plan that will describe your role, expectations, and of course which frequencies you will be using. Many events only require a handheld radio, but some will require additional equipment such as extended antennas and mobile radios.

In March, I "worked" the Old Pueblo ultra marathon in southern Arizona (<https://oldpueblo50.com/>). This is a 50-mile race on trails and forest service roads in the national forest. There is very poor cell reception, few nearby facilities, and no reliable repeater coverage. Our communications are done using 2m simplex and GMRS radios. At this event we keep track of each runner by bib number that passes through our aid station and communicate any missing runners. The missing runners could be injured or off route. Or they could have just slowed down more than expected or perhaps they dropped out of the race without telling race personnel. We do not go home until all participants are accounted for. We also keep busy ensuring our aid stations are properly supplied, communicate the location of the medical personal and cheering on the runners.

Because of the inherent hazards in this marathon, this is one of the more complex events I support. Besides communicating the status of runners, we communicated an ill aid station worker, ATVs removing the trail flagging, and coordinated delivery of supplies and drop bags for the runners. I included a photo of my station. This year I used my Yaesu 991A radio & mag mount antenna and had a solar panel on the vehicle windshield to keep my battery charged. Other years I setup my vertical antenna, and we've experimented with cross banding and mesh networks. (continued on next page)



EmComm (continued)

Other events can be much simpler but still very rewarding. Many events I support are in the metropolitan area where there is cell phone coverage and repeater coverage. In most events you report at a minimum when you arrive at station, the first runners that pass through your station, and when the sweeps pass through your station. You will most likely have a couple more communications about aid station supplies or a runner that wants to drop out of the race. The next event I will be supporting will be the March of Dimes walk in downtown Phoenix.



Are you interested in giving this a try? Go to website: <https://mcecg.net/>, create a login, and browse for an event that interests you. The details on each event describe any special needs (ability to hike or bike) and the skill level needed (beginner radio operator to seasoned veteran). Once you find an event that interests you, sign up for it on the website. About a week before the event you will start getting communications regarding the event.



Krissy, KI7GJJ, On location, ready to operate