

The IslandWalk CERT organization makes use of over-the-counter Family Radio Service (FRS) transceivers commonly purchased and used by individuals for camping, hiking, or biking. We ask that all team members purchase one of these radios. In past years, IWCERT has used donated funds to purchase some number of slightly more powerful radios for use by our Incident Command Team and Zone Leaders. These radios have been programmed with the same FRS channels (frequencies) as the over-the-counter FRS radios EXCEPT that channel position number 8 on the BaoFeng BF-888S radios are programmed to be channel 22 for use on the Incident Command net.

What is a Net? “Net” is an abbreviation for network and represents a collection of radios all talking to each other on the same channel (frequency) for some specific purpose. Each Zone Leader controls a “Net” for the CERT members operating in their Zone, and the Incident Commander controls the IWCERT Incident Command Net for the Zone Leaders and other command function persons to communicate with each other.



### FRS Radio Examples

- Midland GXT1000VP4
- Motorola T260 Talkabout Radio

There are many other manufacturers of these radios that we use during CERT exercises and for actual emergencies. All of these over-the-counter Family Radio Service (FRS) transceivers operate on 22 possible channels (frequencies) that are the same for any FRS radio purchased. Pay no attention to distance claims for these radios. They only work reliably up to about ½ mile over flat terrain as we have in our community.

### Incident Command Post Net:

- FRS Channel 22                      Monitored continuously by Incident Command Post and Medical Team Leader and all Zone Team Leaders

### Zone Team Nets:

- FRS Channel 1                      Zone 1 team operations
- FRS Channel 2                      Zone 2 team operations
- FRS Channel 3                      Zone 3 team operations
- FRS Channel 4                      Zone 4 team operations
- FRS Channel 5                      Zone 5 team operations
- FRS Channel 6                      Zone 6 team operations
- FRS Channel 7                      Zone 7 team operations

## Call Signs:

- **IC** Incident Commander / Command Post
- **Medical** Medical Team Leader
- **Logistics** Logistics Team Leader
- **Communications** Communications Team Leader
- **Zone 1** Zone 1 Team Leader
- **Zone 2** Zone 2 Team Leader, ..... and so on.
- **Everyone Else** Use your first name to identify yourself

## Basic Radio Operating Procedures:

1. Read the manual that comes with your radio! Radios are usually purchased in pairs; practice using them with your spouse or a neighbor.
2. DO NOT use Private Line (PL) or Privacy Code (DCS or CTCSS tones) with your radio. Read the manual. Learn how to set this feature to OFF or No Code on your radio. If you aren't hearing other people talking on the radio it is because you have the privacy feature enabled.
3. These are very low-power radios and will not work well from within your home. To be heard effectively you should be outdoors and not standing right next to a building or large tree that can block your signal.
4. If you are having trouble hearing or being heard, move a few steps in one direction or the other. There most likely is something between you and the other person blocking the signal.
5. All of these radios are "party lines" everyone on your channel can hear anything you say. More importantly, **ONLY ONE PERSON CAN TALK AT A TIME**. Be patient and wait your turn.
6. Radios are non-visual communications. There is no body language to tell you and the other person that the conversation is being understood. You **MUST** answer any question verbally over the radio. A head nod or a wink can't be heard!
7. Always make **contact** **FIRST** and then send your message **SECOND**. Never assume the other person is listening. **ALWAYS** call first, wait for an acknowledgment, and **THEN** send your message.

### **EXAMPLE:**

"Zone 1 Leader this is Paul"; "Paul this is Zone 1 Leader"; "Hi Randy, there is a tree down and blocking entry and exit from Collucio St"; "OK Paul, thanks for letting us know. Zone 1 Leader, OUT"

8. CERT training stresses the use of normal conversation when using the radio. Other than specific call signs designated above use only regular words in your communications. The use of the words "OVER" meaning I'm done talking; it's your turn, and "OUT" meaning I'm done talking and no reply or response is required or expected can be used if communications are difficult or if the net is very busy with many people waiting/wanting to talk.

### Radio Practice/Drill Procedures:

1. Radio practice drills are conducted by IWCERT on the second Thursday of the first month of each calendar quarter; E.G. January, April, July, and October. These drills are used to practice the radio procedures that would normally be used when the team mobilizes after a disaster and everyone is getting organized and ready to respond to the disaster. The drills typically take less than 15 minutes.
2. All team members are encouraged to participate in as many quarterly drills as possible to gain confidence and experience in the use of your radio.
3. At 4:30 pm each Zone Leader will "open" the net on their assigned zone channel. E.G. Zone 1 Team Leader will set his radio to channel 1 and make the following announcement, "This is Randy, Zone 1 Team Leader opening the Zone 1 team radio net. Zone 1 team members are asked to check in now, OVER"
4. Zone team members should first wait their turn and then make contact with their Zone Leader. "Randy this is Paul on Coluccio St. checking in, OVER".
5. WAIT for the Zone Leader to acknowledge each check-in before making your call. "Hi Paul this is Randy. Thanks for checking in. I have a message for all team members so please stay on the radio to receive that message, OVER." "OK Rand I will stand by, OUT"
6. After all zone team members have checked in, the Zone Leader will send any messages he/she has for the team and then end the net. "Thank you everyone for checking in. The Zone 1 radio check net is now closed, OUT"
7. **NOTE:** Zone Leaders may at their discretion change the dates/times for Zone check-in radio nets by using email or other means to communicate the revised date/time of the net to all of their team members. Vacations, block parties, and other events can take priority over drills.
8. **NOTE:** Zone Leaders may choose to use a directed net format with a roll call of members similar to that used for the Incident Command net in item 9 below.

9. At 5:00 pm the Incident Commander or his/her designate will open the Incident Command radio check-in net on channel 22. "This is the IWCERT Incident Command Post opening the incident command radio net for check-ins. This is a directed net. I will call the roll of Zone Leaders and command team persons. Please respond when called."

10. Incident Command Net Roll Call:

**NOTE:** Zone Leaders should report the number of team members that checked in to their Zone Net.

- "Zone 1 Team Leader please check in now". "IC this is Zone 1. We had 4 check-ins.". "Hello Randy, thanks for checking in"
- Zone 2 Team Leader please check in now". "IC this is Zone 2. We had 6 check-ins". "Hello Donna, thanks for checking in"
- Etc, Etc. until all have been called

11. Any information for the net or from station checking into the net will be sent during the net and then the Incident Commander or designate will close the net. "Thank you everyone for checking into the IWCERT Incident Command net. The net is now closed"

### Actual Disaster Response Procedures:

1. Most team communications before a storm will be accomplished by in-person meetings, telephone contacts, email, and text messaging. Radios only become important after the storm event especially if Internet and cell phone service is disrupted.
2. In the hours leading up to a storm, the command team will establish a time for the first Incident Command net to meet on channel 22. Typically this will be 0 to 12 hours before impact from the storm is felt to test radios and communications by radio.
3. While Internet and cell phone service is working, communications between the IC, Zone Leaders, and team members should make use of phone, text, and emails as the use of radios is unnecessary at this time. Only when commercial communications services are interrupted will radio communications be necessary.
4. If/When commercial communication becomes unavailable, then the IC net will be activated for check-ins every 2 hours on even-numbered hours and between the hours of 8:00 am and 10:00 pm daily until the emergency is over and the incident response has been ended. The IC may, depending on the situation, increase or decrease the sequence of IC nets. Any changes must be coordinated with all participating stations before being implemented.

5. All Zone Leaders, IC, Medical Team Leader, Logistics Officer, and Communications Officer shall participate in these IC nets. Available information about the storm, damages, and actions to be taken will be exchanged during the nets.
6. Each Zone Leader is responsible for disseminating information from the IC net to their respective team members. Zone Leaders will establish a regular, scheduled time when team members should have their radios on and be listening for the Zone Net to begin. A good time might be every even-numbered hour on the ½ hour.

**Example:**

Zone Leader checks in to IC net at 2:00 pm and gets the latest information. At 2:30 pm Zone Leader activates his zone net and passes information to/from his team members. Repeat again at 4:00 pm and 4:30 pm respectively and every 2 hours thereafter between 8:00 am and 10:00 pm.

7. Radios should be turned off when not in use to conserve battery power when the electricity is off and there is no generator available to recharge the battery.

Paul Nienaber  
Communications Officer

**Attachment: Hurricane POC Coordinator Radio Net Instructions**